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Pan-Asian Collection

Three American Collections of Asian Art
Freer, Brundage and Rockefeller, 3rd

Volume XXXVII No. 4

Marg

A MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS

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FOR THE
PERFORMING ARTS

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Cover: *Crowned Buddha in Dharmachakramudra*
Kashmir
8th-9th century
Brass inlays of copper and silver
h. 31.11 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.44)
From the collection of John D. Rockefeller, 3rd

GUEST EDITOR'S PREFACE

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When Dr. Saryu Doshi, the Editor of MARG, asked me to guest edit a volume, I suggested the idea that it be devoted to American collectors of Asian Art, which she accepted enthusiastically. My suggestion was somewhat impulsive, for, at the time, I did not realize how difficult a task this would prove to be. From about the last quarter of the nineteenth century, scores of Americans have assembled great collections of Asian art, but the hard cover edition of the volume had to be restricted to only ten collectors of which three appear in each of the two accompanying magazines. Selecting the ten was neither easy nor pleasant, and many eminent collectors, dead or alive, had to be omitted. Some of the active collectors are personal friends, and I would like to assure them that, in making the choice, I had no desire to neglect them.

Because MARG is an Indian publication, it was first of all deemed essential that we select as many collectors of South and Southeast Asian art as possible. Some of the collectors chose not to be included for one reason or another. Others had recently been acknowledged by catalogues or journals devoted entirely to their collections. In some instances, I could not get authors to deliver manuscripts on time. Nevertheless, while emphasizing the Indian and Southeast Asian collections, we have also included in the volume collectors who were largely committed to the arts of East Asia. Moreover, the Introduction, providing an overview of the history of collecting Asian art in America, makes it clear that most early collectors were interested either in Chinese or Japanese art, or both. It is also interesting to note that most major collectors of Asian art are concentrated on the East Coast, generally in the New England states and New York. Some, such as Charles Freer and Avery Brundage, were from the Midwest, and only the late Richard Fuller and Norton Simon belong to the West Coast. Considering that only the Pacific Ocean separates the West Coast from Asia, this lack of interest in Asian art among the affluent on the West Coast is somewhat surprising.

Of the three collectors included in the forthcoming issue of MARG, only one, Nasli Heeramaneck, was by vocation a dealer. However, all those who knew him will realize how, like most dealers, Nasli was really a collector at heart. Even though collectors do not make a living by selling art, often only a fine line divides a collector from a dealer. It is certainly not uncommon for collectors these days to slip into the role of a dealer. In any event, although he lived the greater part of his life in New York, Nasli was a Parsi from Bombay, which made him an appropriate subject for MARG, a magazine published by his compatriots from that city. As his Indian collection is better known among Indian readers, it seemed more fitting to present Nasli's deep and abiding interest in the ancient art of Iran, from where his ancestors migrated to India many centuries ago.

In acknowledging the many people who have helped me in preparing the two issues of MARG and the book, I should first of all like to thank the various collectors and institutions for their kind cooperation, and particularly Ms Sarah Campbell of the Norton Simon Museum. Thanks are also due to all the contributors and to all individuals and institutions, acknowledged separately, for the photographs. Much diligent secretarial help in connection with the volume was provided by Janet Zieschang.

If the volume is appreciated by readers, then perhaps MARG will consider publishing a second volume devoted to other enthusiastic American collectors of Asian art. One of the great advantages of the American political and social systems is that most private collections ultimately end up in public institutions, as is clear from this volume. This is no small achievement, for thereby not only are the objects preserved for posterity, but they become accessible to the layman as well as the scholar, to Americans as well as to the citizens of the world at large. Those who espouse the cause of narrow nationalism may be uncomfortable with the fact that so many treasures of their country are now residing in America. Morality of the issues aside, it should be stressed that the enjoyment of beauty is not a national prerogative. While one does not condone the illicit trafficking in art, a work of art does remain the most pleasant means of understanding and appreciating the cultures of others.

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INTRODUCTION

Pratapaditya Pal

(1)

Passage O soul to India!
Eclaircise the myths Asiatic, the
primitive fables.
Not you alone proud truths of the world,
Nor you alone ye facts of modern science,
But myths and fables of old, Asia's,
Africa's fables,
The far-darting beams of the spirit,
the unloos'd dreams,
The deep diving bibles and legends,
The daring plots of the poets, the elder
religions;
O you temples fairer than lilies pour'd
over by the rising sun!
O you fables spurning the known, eluding
the hold of the known, mounting
to heaven!
You lofty and dazzling towers, pinnacled,
red as roses, burnish'd with gold!
Towers of fables immortal fashion'd from
mortal dreams!
You, too, I welcome and fully the same
as the rest!
You, too, with joy I sing.

When America's greatest poet Walt Whitman penned these lines in 1868, none of the major art museums in the country had been founded. Although Yankee traders had been trading with China, Japan, and India for almost eight decades, and drinking tea from porcelain cups imported from China had become a well-established practice, none of the merchants, mostly from New England, who braved the high seas to make the arduous voyages to Asia, had either the inclination or the opportunity to collect great art. Apart from porcelain and silks, some objects of aesthetic appeal and others of ethnographic interest did find their way into New England homes, and are now largely displayed in the Peabody Museum at Salem in Massachusetts. Even if the early Yankee traders of Salem were not themselves collectors of art, it cannot be fortuitous that several of the early admirers of Asian art happen to have been Boston brahmins, some even residents of Salem. By the time Walt Whitman died in 1892, one could certainly visit the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the homes of several collectors, mostly in Massachusetts but also elsewhere—such as New York and Detroit—and see the visual embodiments of the "myths and fables", "the daring plots of the poets", and "the elder religions" of Asia, about which the American poet sang so eloquently in 1868.

The history of early American collectors of Asian art is inextricably woven with that of the growth of the Asiatic collections of the Boston Museum.[1] Among the great, mention should be made of Edward Sylvester Morse (1830-1925), Ernest Francisco Fenollosa (1853-1908), William Sturgis Bigelow (1850-1926), Denman Waldo Ross (1853-1935), William Stuart Spaulding (1865-1937) and his brother John Taylor Spaulding (1870-1948), and Charles Bain Hoyt (1889-1949). It is primarily their collections and generosity that has made the Boston Museum the greatest repository of Asian art, certainly in America if not in the world. Interestingly, most of these men were not merchants, although, as in other areas of collecting, in the Asian area too, the principal collectors have been men whose wealth

was acquired mostly through trade and industry. Among the seven Bostonians mentioned above, Morse, Fenollosa, and Ross were scholars, Bigelow a physician, and Hoyt inherited his wealth through his mother's share in the Bain Wagon Company. Another great collector of Asian art in this period was Grenville Lindale Winthrop (1864-1943) of New York. A Harvard man like Fenollosa and Ross, his preeminent collection of Chinese art was bequeathed to the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The other non-Bostonian pioneer was, of course, Charles Lang Freer (1856-1919), who is included in this volume.

It is rather curious that, although the early American merchants began trading largely with India and China, the pioneer collectors were mostly interested in the arts of Japan. This was in part because of the rage for *Japonisme* that swept through Paris about a century ago and which considerably influenced the Impressionist movement in European art. Paris was, of course, the hub of the civilized world then, and it was only natural that Boston brahmins from the hub of the American intellectual and cultural world should also flock to Paris to stimulate their various taste buds. Several of the pioneer collectors of Boston were exposed to Japanese art and culture while visiting Paris, but, unlike the French, who were admirers of Japan from a distance, the Americans decided to visit the country and learn about the culture at first hand. This, in fact, remained a matter of faith with many collectors of Asian art subsequently. Freer made several journeys to China, while John D. Rockefeller, 3rd, who also is included in this publication, once remarked:

> Thanks to that trip [through South and Southeast Asia in 1953] we found ourselves very drawn to Asia—its peoples, its countries, and their cultures. Our collecting has always been closely related to our feeling for these Asian friends. It also expresses my hope of gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation of these older civilizations.[2]

Most collectors of Asian art included here have traveled several times to Asian countries. This is, of course, easy to do today, what with jets and the comfort of five-star hotels, but it was a different story for Morse, Fenollosa, and Freer. Their aesthetic adventures often involved more exciting, mundane escapades that is the very stuff of adventure stories, as is clear from Freer's experiences in China (see pp. 9-28).

(2)

Among the early Bostonian collectors, Morse concentrated on Japanese ceramics, assembling well over five thousand pieces. The Spaulding brothers limited themselves to Japanese prints, and formed a collection of over 6,000 examples—many of which were acquired through the eminent twentieth-century architect, Frank Lloyd Wright (1869-1959), who also was a collector of the same genre. Charles Hoyt was principally a collector of Chinese and Korean ceramics. As Jan Fontein, the Director of the Boston Museum, has pointed out, "Hoyt was among the first to recognize the beauty of early Chinese ceramics and, with the exception of *Kuan* ware (which he disliked) and Chun ware . . . his collection covers the entire spectrum from prehistory to Ming."[3] Fenollosa was mostly a collector of Japanese paintings, and, after his death, the entire collection—which includes rare Buddhist paintings, especially of the Heian period (784-1185), as well as such treasures as Shuko's charming study of a monkey, or a six-panel folding screen delineating a subtle but evocative landscape with birds by the gifted Kano Shoei (1519-1592), were bought for the Boston Museum by Charles Goddard Weld (1857-1911).

Of these early admirers of East Asian art, Bigelow's tastes were the broadest. Almost every major area of Japanese art appealed to him, and, in many ways, no other single American has yet surpassed Bigelow—not only for assembling the most important and comprehensive collection of Japanese art by an individual, but also for contributing towards the better understanding and relations between the two countries.

The most eclectic collector of Asian art among the pioneer Boston group was Denman Ross. An historian by training, Ross was not a rich man, but he must hold some sort of world record for having given over 11,000 items to the Boston Museum, which benefited every department in the institution. While the greater proportion of his benefaction enriched the Museum's Asiatic Department, the 4,006 gifts made to the Textile Department included works from China, Japan, India, Iran, Spain, Italy, France, and England, as well as rare groups of both Coptic and Peruvian weavings and embroideries. Apart from his own collections, as a life-long trustee of the Museum, he was instrumental in acquiring both the Victor Goloubew Collection of Indian and Persian Paintings (1912) and the Coomaraswamy Collection of Indian Art in 1917. Although not formed by an American, this was the first major collection of Indian art to enter an American collection through the magnanimity of an individual American collector. Primarily because of this collection and the subsequent additions made by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), who served until death as the Keeper of the Collections, Boston retained its primacy in Indian art until the sixties.

Like Ross, Grenville Winthrop also was an eclectic collector whose vast holdings, which numbered 3,700 objects, included Chinese art, American and European drawings, paintings,

prints, sculpture, and clocks, as well as pre-Columbian art. While his Asian collection consisted mostly of Chinese art, including bronzes and jades of the Shang-Han Dynasties, an extraordinary group of Buddhist sculptures as well as ceramic sculpture, and a few Buddhist paintings, he had also acquired, among other things, Buddhist art of Japan and Korea, along with a few South and Southeast Asian pieces. Unlike Freer and most of the Boston brahmins, Winthrop "loathed the discomfort of traveling", and assembled most of his collection from New York. Although, professionally, he was a lawyer and practiced until 1936, his wealth was hereditary, and so he could devote himself entirely to his passion with quiet devotion. Until the removal of his vast collection to the Fogg in 1943, his house on 81st Street was, indeed, a veritable pilgrimage for art lovers. As Agnes Mongan has remarked:

> Year after year Mr. Winthrop received the Museum Course Schedule at his house on 81st Street. He always welcomed them with the grave, formal courtesy that was so much the mark of the man, offering them every freedom of that amazing house where every room, shelf, and corner harbored a treasure. As they moved from room to room in small groups, he would quietly join one or another, offering information only if he were asked, but visibly pleased when the students responded immediately with an outburst of enthusiastic pleasure.[4]

(3)

The interest in *Japonisme* spawned a number of collectors of Japanese prints in New York, including a few eminent artists.[5] The most prominent among the rich in New York was the "Sugar King" Henry O. Havemeyer (1847-1907) and his second wife Louisine (1855-1929). Though well known for their European collection, which now resides at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Havemeyers also collected Japanese prints, ceramics, paintings, and lacquer. They bequeathed a collection of 807 Japanese prints to the museum "more than half of which are small *surimono* (literally, "printed things"), limited, luxury-edition prints." Among other early print collectors of New York whose benefactions have enriched the public institutions, mention should be made of Charles Stewart Smith (1832-1909), J. Alder Weier (1852-1919), Howard Mansfield (1849-1930), Louis V. Ledoux (1880-1948), and Henry L. Phillips (died 1939).

Both in the second half of the last century and early in this century, a number of American artists were certainly influenced by Japanese art and were collectors of prints. One of the earliest was the American Impressionist painter Mary Cassatt (1845-1926). Cassatt lived in Paris since 1874, and her collection of Utamaro adorned the glass-enclosed verandah of her chateau. It so happened that she was Mrs. Havemeyer's best friend, and very likely, the predominance of Utamaro in The Havemeyer Collection reflects Cassatt's taste.

Another pioneer collector of Japanese prints was the celebrated artist James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) whose influence on Freer is discussed elsewhere in this volume. Whistler went to Paris in 1855, long before Cassatt did, and, as pointed out by Julia Meech-Pekarik, he "was in the vanguard of the early enthusiasts for *Japonisme,* and the development of his own style, under the influence of prints, is typical of the times."[6] Two other contemporaries of Whistler, though less well known, who were influenced by Japanese prints were the Boston painters John La Farge (1835-1910) and John Chandler Bancroft (1835-1901). Winthrop was one of the early collectors of La Farge's works. Inspired by La Farge, Bancroft's collection of over 3,000 prints, covering the entire history of ukiyo-e, is today the proud possession of the Worcester Art Museum. Other American artists, who were deeply involved with Japanese prints in the early decades of this century, include Hamilton Easter Field (1873-1922) of Brooklyn, Samuel P. Isham (1855-1914) of New York, the Dutch painter S. C. Bosch Reitz (1860-1938), the first curator of the Department of Far Eastern Art at The Metropolitan, and Arnold Genthe (1869-1942), "an American high-society photographer of German descent who spent much of his life in New York."[7] The best known among the great architects of the twentieth century is, of course, Frank Lloyd Wright, whose love affair with Japanese culture in general and prints, in particular, is well known.

By the turn of the century, collectors of Asian art were blossoming in cities other than Boston and New York. Apart from Freer, who was from Detroit, an early collector of Chinese art was Alfred Fiske Pillsbury (1869-1950) of Minneapolis. The surname is probably more familiar with American housewives than most of the collectors mentioned above, because of its association with flour manufacturing. Although Pillsbury's principal interest was ancient Chinese bronzes, he also collected other forms of Chinese art including archaic jades, Wei and Tang tomb sculptures, and Tang pottery and porcelain. Interestingly, he assembled a collection of Persian pottery, as well as a group of Buddhist sculpture from Thailand and Cambodia. Apart from Ross, he must have been one of the earliest collectors

of Southeast Asian sculpture in the country. "Guided by an extraordinary eye for form and color, and, on the whole, less interested in scholarly and archaeological considerations, Mr. Pillsbury assembled collections which reflect his instinctive and discriminating taste."[8] The entire collection was given to The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, with which he was closely associated shortly before his death in 1950.

Other than Charles Freer, the only collector included in this volume who was born in the nineteenth century was Avery Brundage (1887-1975) of Chicago (see pp. 29-52). By the time Brundage appeared on the scene, a great deal of Chinese and Japanese art was already either in private hands or had entered museums. It is remarkable that, at a time when both museums and private collectors were voraciously acquiring Chinese art, Avery Brundage was able to assemble one of the largest and most significant collections in that area. The flamboyant and internationally known Olympic Games personality, Avery Brundage was eclectic in his tastes and collected arts produced in most other cultures of Asia, though his principal area of interest was Chinese art. He also liked to buy large groups of objects belonging to different cultures, though only Asian. Like Brundage, Arthur M. Sackler, who has recently bequeathed a vast proportion of his Asian collections to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, is also an encyclopaedic collector whose interest ranges from ancient West Asia to Japan. Indeed, the influx of Chinese art into this country during the first four decades of this century was, to say the least, phenomenal. Although John D. Rockefeller, 3rd, one of the most discriminating collectors of the second half of the twentieth century, did not begin collecting until after 1950, his father, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and other members of his family had acquired objects of Asian art decades earlier. In fact, among the great connoisseurs of Asian art in America who were active from the thirties on, mention should be made especially of Laurence Sickman of Kansas City and Richard E. Fuller (1822-1871) of Seattle. The eminence that the two museums in those two cities have achieved for their Asian collections is due largely to their enthusiasm and aesthetic sensibility.

(4)

In contrast to Chinese and Japanese art, the interest in South and Southeast Asian art is a relatively recent phenomenon. Again, the Boston Museum provided the leadership when they acquired the Ross-Coomaraswamy Collection in 1917. Thereafter, however, while some collectors, such as Rockefellers, Freer, or Winthrop, bought the occasional Indian or Southeast Asian object, it was left to the major museums to acquire in these relatively esoteric areas. By and large, interest in Indian art in this country has been a phenomenon of the sixties when, after the Communist takeover of China in 1949, importation of Chinese goods into the country became contraband. This was also the period that witnessed the emergence of many new collectors of Japanese art, such as John G. Powers and Mary and Jackson Burke.[9]

The two most well known collectors of Asian art of the post-World War II period whose tastes covered a very wide and diverse range were, of course, Avery Brundage and John D. Rockefeller, 3rd. Another collector, who was equally dedicated to the various traditions of Asian art, was Christian Humann (1929-1981) whose collection was unfortunately dispersed upon his untimely death. Among the living, the Chicago collectors James and Marilyn Alsdorf are probably the closest modern counterparts of Denman Ross or Grenville Winthrop for, although seemingly their first love is oriental art, they, too, have formed a vast collection in which almost every major culture of the world is represented by superb examples. Indeed, in its range, quality, and quantity, the Alsdorf Collection could easily form the basis of a general art museum of major proportions.

An unusual collector of South and Southeast Asian art included in the hard cover edition of this volume is Samuel Eilenberg, known generally among friends and foes as Sammy. A world-renowned mathematician and, like Ross, an academic, Sammy is equally at home among abstruse mathematical formulae as he is among Indian and Javanese bronzes. A highly discriminating collector, he has remained a champion of the theory that small is beautiful. While he has been favored by an uncanny eye and extraordinary luck, he is remarkably knowledgeable and is fascinated by the unusual object. His collection of hundreds of objects from ancient Gandhara and bronzes from Java is unsurpassed in their range and quality.

The youngest, though not in age, among the living Asian art collectors represented in the accompanying soft cover magazine as well as the hard cover edition of this volume is the industrialist Norton Simon of Los Angeles. Although better known for his extraordinary collection of European art, in less than a decade Simon has assembled a remarkable collection of South and Southeast Asian sculpture. Moreover, even though the most famous Asian sculpture in his collection is an Indian bronze Dancing Shiva, he has, in fact, amassed an outstanding collection of Southeast Asian sculptures—primarily from Cambodia and Thailand. Like the arts of Nepal and Tibet, the arts of Southeast Asia, too, have gained in

popularity largely from the fifties. Here again, because of Coomaraswamy, Boston had been one of the first American museums to collect Southeast Asian art, but few other museums or private collectors did so until after World War II. Among the two early collectors were Brundage and Rockefeller, both of whose collections now are in public museums.

(5)

By and large, there have been fewer collectors of West Asian art than the large number who have collected arts of the eastern half of the continent. The ancient arts of West Asia, regarded generally as the Near East, have usually been acquired by collectors of Classical or Egyptian material. Mostly, perhaps because of their early association with archaeology, art from these cultures has been acquired directly by museums, some of which were involved in archaeological excavations in those regions. Perhaps the most well known of the collectors of ancient West Asiatic material is Norbert Schimmel of New York, whose taste is as refined as his love for small but exquisitely crafted objects.[10] Although primarily a dealer, Nasli M. Heeramaneck (1902-1971) was also deeply interested in the arts of West Asia, especially from Iran. This is not difficult to understand, as he was a Parsi, who are the descendants of ancient Persians. Parsis sought refuge in India from the spread of Islam across their land a dozen centuries ago.

Curiously also, the exquisitely painted book illustrations and pictures of Iran, or the sumptuous and colorful ceramic ware of West Asia, have largely remained the prerogative of museums, and do not seem to have excited the passions of early collectors, with the exception of Freer. Once again, the Boston Museum was one of the pioneering institutions and, through the farsightedness of Denman Ross, acquired the Victor Goloubew Collection from Paris in 1912. Eric Schroeder (1904-1971), the eminent scholar of Persian art, built up the much-admired collection at the Fogg, while both the Metropolitan in New York and the Freer at Washington acquired aggressively to assemble two of the finest collections of Islamic art.

The last four decades have also seen a tremendous surge of interest in both Indian and Persian paintings among collectors in this country. Without question, the most avid and aggressive collector of Indian, Persian, and Turkish paintings has been Edwin Binney, 3rd, who is represented in the accompanying soft cover magazine and in the hard cover book by an essay about his Turkish collection which is unexcelled outside Turkey. His Indian painting collection includes well over a thousand examples, and is probably the most comprehensive assemblage of this material in America today. A more elusive collector of both Indian and Persian paintings, who has also recently been seduced by the charms of Himalayan art, is Stuart Cary Welch, who chooses to remain anonymous as a collector but cannot hide his light under a bushel. Also a scholar and creator of fascinating exhibitions, Welch has probably done more than any other individual American to excite his fellow countrymen's interest in Indian and Persian paintings.

Another collector included in the hardbound volume, who also was first attracted to Indian painting but has broadened his interests considerably, is Paul F. Walter of New York. A collector of contemporary avant-garde American art and international photography, his interests also encompass South and Southeast Asian terracottas, as well as British artists' renderings of India and other parts of Asia. He is probably the first seriously devoted American collector of British Indian art, although much material of this genre was earlier acquired by Paul Mellon and is now housed in The Yale Center for British Art. Mellon had primarily collected the material as part of his general interest in British artists, but Walter was interested first in India and then in the images of India created by British artists who visited the country in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

(6)

American interest in the Himalayan regions is a relatively recent phenomenon, although many individuals have been fascinated by Tibet from the early parts of this century. Either as an appendage to China, or due to efforts of missionaries in the Himalayan regions, small collections of Tibetan and Nepali objects have entered the various museum collections at least as early as the twenties. Here again, the Boston Museum seems to have taken the lead; the Coomaraswamy Collection contained several Nepali objects which, until the Heeramaneck Collection was acquired by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1969, remained the most important assemblage of art from this Himalayan kingdom. Until 1969, the most extensive collection of Tibetan art was housed in the Newark Museum, although Boston, too, by then had built up a strong Tibetan collection. In 1952, Stella Kramrisch migrated to Philadelphia from Calcutta, and, due largely to her interest, Philadelphia became active in collecting arts from the Himalayan regions.

Apart from the growing general interest in Indian and Tibetan religions in this country

during the sixties, largely, no doubt, due to the disillusionment with the American involvement in Vietnam, two exhibitions have contributed towards attracting American collectors to Himalayan art. One was the 1964 exhibition of the ART OF NEPAL by Stella Kramrisch, and the other was ART OF TIBET by the present writer. Significantly, both exhibitions were organized by the Asia House Gallery of The Asia Society in New York, which had been founded by the farsighted John D. Rockefeller, 3rd. in 1956. More than any other institution, the Asia House Gallery and its talented first director, Gordon Washburn (1904-1984), must be largely credited with inspiring the new generation of Asian art collectors in the sixties through a series of brilliantly conceived and installed exhibitions.

Immediately inspired by the 1964 Nepal exhibition were the Zimmermans (included in the hard cover edition of this volume). The art of Nepal hit them like a bolt from the blue, and soon they also began collecting Tibetan art and Indian folk bronzes. Another collector who began with Tibet, but expanded his horizon rapidly to include both Nepal and India, was John Ford of Baltimore (in hard cover edition). Unlike the Zimmermans, early in life John Ford had become familiar with Oriental art, largely Chinese. Along with many other Asian art collectors, particularly in New York today, he, too, must owe something to the Asia House Gallery and its exhibitions for his pleasant avocation.[11] If the Zimmerman and the Ford Collections of Himalayan art can ever be assembled together under one roof, it will certainly eclipse all public collections of such material anywhere in the world.

This brief survey of the history of private collecting of Asian art in America is by no means exhaustive, but it should provide the reader with some idea of the passions, the singlemindedness, and the tastes of individuals who, for different reasons and motivations, devoted their lives and wealth to acquiring both sensual pleasure and spiritual exaltation through collecting art. All the collectors mentioned here were not rich, but all were and are equally avaricious and zealous in amassing their aesthetic wealth. The wealthy could easily have squandered their fortunes in more frivolous pursuits. As Norton Simon once told me, he could easily have spent his money in buying luxurious yachts, building palatial mansions, and owning dozens of Rolls Royces, but he chose not to do so. While it is true that American collectors seem to have a voracious appetite for acquiring art, and it is fashionable these days to decry the aggressiveness of both collectors and museums, the fact remains that most private collections in America, unlike in most other countries, end up in public institutions where they are preserved for posterity and are accessible to all who are interested in art and culture. It is certainly a better way to get to know one another than by confrontation on a battlefield or through political oppression and subjugation.

The late Gordon B. Washburn, in 1970, wrote:

> In bringing to the West worthy representations of the art and culture of Asia, Mr. Rockefeller believes that the lives of all of us will be enriched and we will have a deeper and more meaningful knowledge of the great peoples with whom we share the world.

No matter what their personal motivations for collecting Asian art, most collectors probably share that belief.

FOOTNOTES

1 See J. Fontein, "Notes on the History of the Collection" in *Asiatic Art in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.* Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982, pp. 6-15.

2 G. B. Washburn's Foreword in S. E. Lee, *Asian Art: Selections from the Collection of Mr. & Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd.* New York: The Asia Society, Inc., 1970.

3 Fontein, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

4 Agnes Mongan's Preface in *Grenville L. Winthrop Retrospective for a Collector.* Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Museum of Art, 1969.

5 J. Meech-Pekarik, "Early Collectors of Japanese Prints and The Metropolitan Museum of Art" in *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 17 (1984), pp. 93-118. This section of the essay relies heavily upon this informative and interesting article.

6 *Ibid.*,p. 95.

7 *Ibid.*,p. 113.

8 "The Alfred F. Pillsbury Bequest" in *Bulletin of The Minneapolis Institute of Arts XXXIX,* 18 (1950), pp. 86-91. See also B. Karlgren, *A Catalogue of the Chinese Bronzes in the Alfred F. Pillsbury Collection.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1950.

9 For the Powers Collection, see John M. Rosenfield & Shiyiro Shimada, *Traditions of Japanese Art: Selections from the Kimiko and John Powers Collection.* Cambridge: Harvard University, 1970.
For the Burke Collection, see *Apollo,* CXII, No. 276 (New Series), 1985. Mary Burke's essay about the growth of their tastes and collection makes fascinating reading.

10 Oscar White Muscarella (ed.), *Ancient Art: The Norbert Schimmel Collection.* Mainz, West Germany: Verlag Philipp Von Zabern, 1974.

11 Recently, another private collection, known as the Kronos Collection, was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. See M. Lerner, *The Flame and the Lotus,* New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1984.

CHARLES LANG FREER

(1856-1919)

Robert E. Fisher

Charles Freer (Fig. 1) belongs to that first generation of enterprising Americans who gathered great collections of art during the late nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries. This epoch produced a colorful and often eccentric group of wealthy collectors, such as J. P. Morgan, Isabella Stuart Gardner and Henry Huntington. Their pioneering efforts built many of the great American collections and helped establish and support the prestigious museums in such cities as Boston, New York and Philadelphia. With the exception of Charles Freer, they collected almost entirely in the area of European art, especially French and Italian masters.

During these years, what little Asian collecting there was came to be dominated by figures associated with the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Led by such individuals as Edward Morse (1830-1925) and Ernest Fenollosa (1835-1908) attention was first given to Japanese art and much of that to woodblock prints (ukiyo-e). Each of these early collectors of Asian art was devoted to the art of one country, usually Japan, and today Boston houses this country's finest collection of Japanese art, including ukiyo-e.

One man, however, had the vision to see beyond the arts of one individual Asian country and acquire objects from nearly all cultures, including the Near East. Charles Lang Freer was the first individual to extend his collecting across Asian borders. His legacy of over 9,000 objects, given to the country in 1906 (and since augmented by some 15,000 more) is a unique testimonial to a true pioneer in the field of Asian art. The Freer collection is the first body of pan-Asian art ever gathered by one individual and the material added over the years continues to reflect the high standards established by its founder. Today the Freer Gallery, in Washington, D.C., is unsurpassed in its balance of breadth and quality.

Nothing in Charles Freer's background would seem to have prepared him for a career in art. He was forced to leave school at age 14, went to work in a cement factory, and at 16 became a clerk in a general store. His work there attracted the attention of Colonel Frank J. Hecker, the superintendent of a railroad, who offered Freer a job. Thus, in 1873, began a life-long business relationship between Col. Hecker and Freer which provided the collector with the means to pursue his love of art. In 1880 the two left New York for Detroit where they founded the Peninsular Car Works. Freer became the assistant treasurer and after completing a merger with the American Car and Foundry Company in 1900, retired from active business. He was then 44 years old. His life style thereafter seemed to change little, however, and unlike many of his well-known contemporaries who were also amassing great collections, he remained rather quiet, avoiding the publicity and extravagance that accompanied the activities of such famous collectors as J. P. Morgan or the social ebullience of most of the others. Aline Saarinen's description of Freer aptly summarizes his style:

> "But Charles Lang Freer, a fragile, small-framed man with astonishingly delicate hands and gracious bearing, isolated himself in a silk cocoon against the showy, boisterous pageantry of his age. He created a private world of refinement and serenity and excellences. Slowly, conscientiously, rather preciously, he nurtured each aspect of his well-tempered existence, until ultimately the man, his surroundings, his associates and his way of life were blended into a single, unified expression of the quintessence and of the exquisite (and expensive) simplicity to which he was dedicated."[1]

He built a home in Detroit, which included a pair of large rooms with atriums for lighting (much as one finds in the galleries of the Freer today) and kept a villa on the isle of Capri, but avoided the limelight associated with the large-scale purchase of art. The image that emerges is of a man of meticulous perfectionism, careful of each detail and committed to quality, terms that can readily be applied to the Freer Gallery as it exists today.

Freer's earliest acquisitions took place well before his "retirement" however. He had purchased some Japanese objects as early as 1887, the first being a folding fan with a crane painted upon it and thought to be by Korin (but later found to be by his follower), bought from the New York dealer Takayanagi who also sold him his first Chinese object, in 1893. Works by Korin and Rimpa works, a school of paintings that epitomizes the best in late Japanese decorative taste, occupy a major place in his collecting and the Rimpa paintings in the Freer are of the highest quality. Certainly the famous screens of "Matsushima" (Fig. 2), by Sotatsu, acquired in 1906, represent the apogee of this school. In 1903 he did acquire a fine example of Korin's fan painting, this time unquestionably authentic. It was during the early 1890s that he began to really focus his energies upon collecting, including a number of American painters that attracted him, such as Dwight William Tryon and Thomas Wilmer Dewing. At that same time several people began to play significant roles in his development as a collector.

1

1 *Freer* by Edward Steichen, 1916.
This photo shows Freer late in his life, as he died in 1919.

The Influence of Whistler and Fenollosa

Best known was the famous and irascible American expatriate painter, James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903). The two met for the first time in Paris, in 1890, by which time Freer already owned a number of works by Whistler, including some fine etchings purchased in 1887. Their friendship lasted until Whistler's death in 1903 (Freer was on his way to visit him that same day) and did much to mold Freer's taste for the subtleties of Asian art, especially Japanese. Both men favored muted tones and understatement, best seen in Whistler's

paintings and in Freer's collecting instincts. Not surprisingly, Freer became an avid collector of Whistler's works, gathering over 1,000 paintings, pastels and prints, including the famous Peacock Room. The Freer Gallery, along with Glasgow, now has the largest collection of Whistler material.

One has but to view one of Whistler's paintings (Fig. 3), with its subtle shifts of color, its gentle tonal changes and near monochrome palette to appreciate the similarity between his work and many of the Japanese ceramics and paintings that were attractive to Freer. Unlike so many of the French painters who utilized Japanese objects such as fans and screens merely as decorative elements in their paintings, Whistler had a fundamental understanding of the Japanese esthetic. This characteristic was noted by Asian scholars, such as Fenollosa, and served to further bond the artist's taste to that of Freer. The radical (to most Europeans) designs and compositions of Japanese painting became part of Whistler's work, and this design sensitivity, shared by Freer, made Whistler's art a continuing fascination to the American collector. There is little doubt that the friendship between them helped shape Freer's taste in collecting.

A purchase made before 1895, a few years after he met Whistler, reveals just how close their preferences were. This painting (Fig. 4) by the Japanese Edo Period master, Kano Tan'yu, reveals a subtle understatement and atmospheric quality similar to that found in Whistler's works. It is interesting that Freer was to later sell off his Japanese prints, as if in disdain of the then popular vogue for collecting them, but he did keep a fine group of some 300 ukiyo-e paintings, including a beautiful view of Mt. Fuji by Hokusai (purchased in 1889), long a favorite artist of Freer's. He also never ceased collecting Japanese works of the type done by Tan'yu, remaining true to his early taste.

Another important influence on Freer was Ernest Fenollosa. The two met at about the time Freer was retiring from business, to pursue art collecting full-time. Fenollosa acted as a catalyst upon Freer and his collecting accelerated from that point. By then Fenollosa had his reputation well established in the art world, but ruined in the Boston social scene and was no longer in the employ of the Museum of Fine Arts. His divorce and remarriage had cost him his position there and he depended upon lectures and selling art for a living. Freer purchased a number of works through him, including one of his two lohan (arhat) paintings from the famous set of 100 owned by the Daitoku-ji in Kyoto. Boston had acquired 10 from that set in the 1890s and through Fenollosa Freer was able to purchase another in 1902. Called "Lohans Laundering" (Fig. 5) and done in 1178 by a Song artist named Lin Tinggui, it is one of the masterpieces of early Chinese painting. He acquired another from the same set in Tokyo in 1907. Among the more than 30 objects purchased from Fenollosa are fine Japanese screens by Kano Mitsunobu, the only ones by this artist outside Japan. Their friendship lasted to the end, just as it had with Whistler, and it was Freer who paid to have Fenollosa's ashes taken from London to their final resting place at Miidera Temple in Japan, in 1908.

Foreign Travel Stimulates His Collecting

Many of the most interesting objects gathered by Freer came during his travels. In addition to trips to Europe and the Near East, he made four separate visits to Asia. The first occurred in 1895 and included his only visit to India. According to his diaries he spent three months there, visiting famous monuments but failed to purchase any objects. On his way to Japan he made an unexpected stop in Hong Kong, for three days, and a one week visit to Shanghai before landing in Nagasaki. During his four months in Japan he visited the Osaka and Kyoto areas, including Horyu-ji and the Byodo-in, stopped in Nagoya and Nikko and finally Tokyo. Although the trip was long, he purchased only seven objects, mostly Japanese, but made valuable contacts, including such collectors as Takashi Masuda, head of the banking firm of Mitsui. These associations were to help Freer in choosing for his own collection.

In 1907 he again went to the Far East, this time with his reputation as an important collector having preceded him. He purchased some ceramics, including early Han objects, during brief stops in Hong Kong, Canton and Shanghai, before sailing on to Japan. During his two months in Japan he was shown the most important objects and his diaries report that he was able to see nearly all the known Chinese paintings in private and public collections. His interest in Chinese art was to increase noticeably from this time and his next trip would be devoted to China proper. It is important to note that Freer was almost alone, in his time, in appreciating early Chinese art and for seeking it in China rather than Japan, which was the source for most other collectors.

However much he travelled, and though acquiring many objects, Freer followed his usual pattern of purchasing most of his art from dealers in the West. In addition to Fenollosa, he bought from S. Bing in Paris (his Motonobu "Three Teachings" in 1904), from Yamanaka and Bunshichi (the famous Sotatsu screens of "Matsushima" in 1906), and especially from Bunkyo Matsuki. The latter had been a Buddhist monk and later opened a shop in Boston, supplying Freer with some of his finest works, including the Japanese Nambokucho Period (1320s-1360s) "16 Lohan" by Ryozen (1904), initially regarded as Chinese by Freer. Matsuki also provided works by Sotatsu and Koetsu in 1903 and a superb tea bowl by Koetsu, in 1899, that is now

regarded as one of the finest examples of raku ware in the collection.

During the same year as his second Asian trip, he acquired an excellent collection of Korean ceramics, some 82 pieces, from the Horace Newton Allen collection that became the foundation for a fine Korean collection. It is interesting that Freer generally did not favor Chinese porcelains, finding their surfaces too "hard" or lacking in the more soft or earthy qualities of stoneware. Korean celadons (Fig. 6) are actually high-fired stoneware, covered with a feldspathic glaze, that are close to porcelain in appearance yet retain those subdued and gentle textural qualities Freer preferred. His choice of Korean celadons clearly fits well into his esthetic taste, for their color and surface have been described, by Gompertz, in terms that could just as well be applied to a Whistler painting, a continuous source of inspiration in Freer's collecting:

> "There are, indeed, few more lovely sights in the whole field of ceramics than a well-selected group of celadons, with their smooth, soft glaze texture and restful tones ranging from an ethereal bluish green to olive or dove-grey."[2]

Freer was again travelling in 1909. This was his most productive trip, in terms of the number of objects purchased. He began in Europe, with a stop in Egypt, where he acquired a very important early Christian text, various Byzantine objects and a fine Ilkhanid tile from Persia, before landing again in Hong Kong. He then went on to Shanghai, Shantung, Qinqdao, to Tientsin and finally to Beijing. He remained four and a half weeks there and

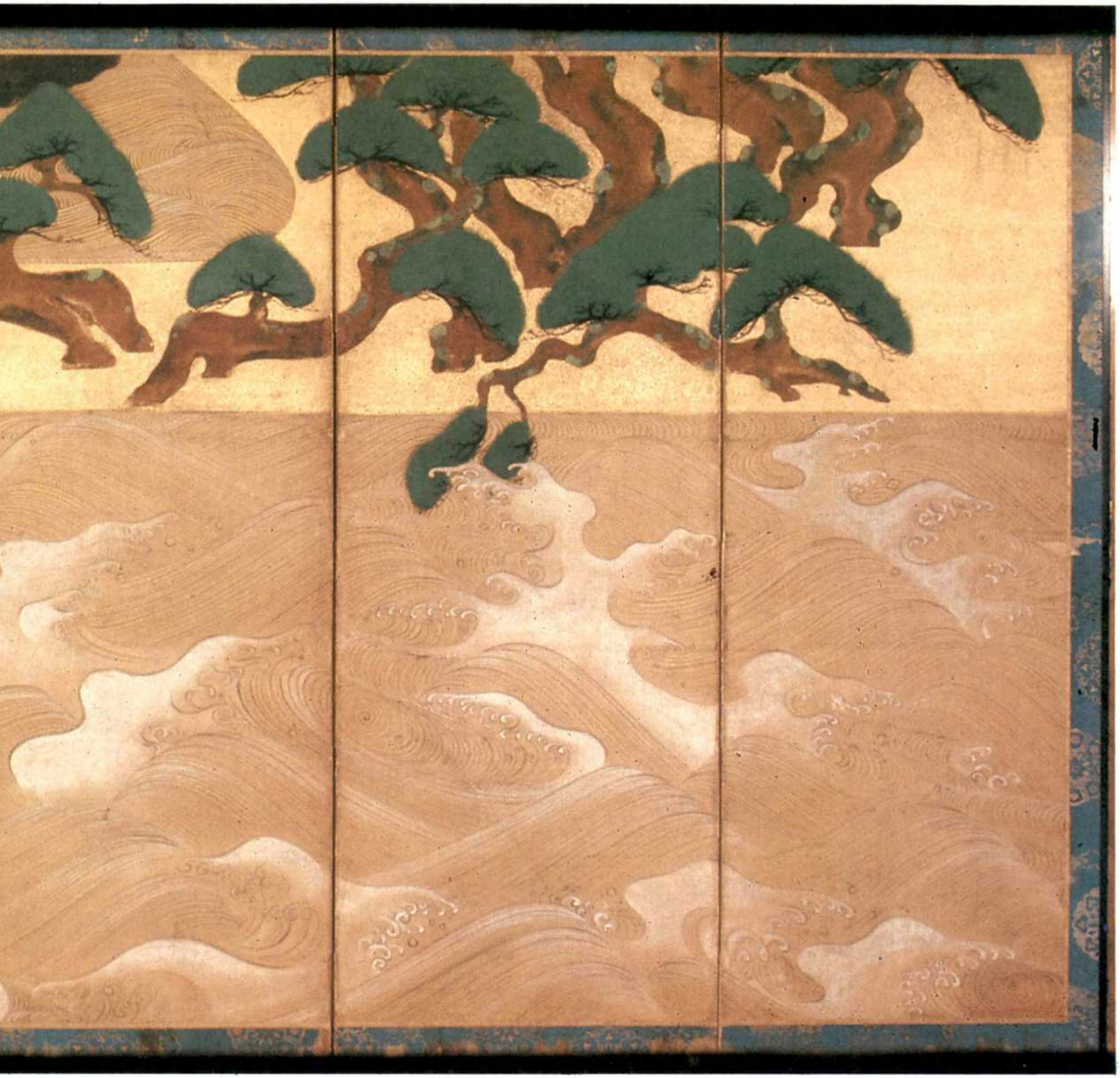
2 "Waves at Matsushima" by Tawaraya Sotatsu
Japanese
Edo Period (1615-1868)
Ink, color, gold leaf, paint and silver on paper
One of a pair of screens (painting only),
152 cm. x 355.7 cm.
(Acc. no. 06.232)
These screens are the most important works by this artist outside Japan.

shipped over 1,800 objects to his home in Detroit. This was, indeed, collecting on a grand scale!

Compared to his East Asian holdings, Freer acquired relatively few Indian works. His only visit to India was much like his first trip to Japan, in which he visited many sites but purchased few objects. There is no record of any purchases during his three months in India. Unfortunately, he never returned and therefore all his Indian acquisitions were through dealers in the West.

His major purchase of Indian art was in 1907 when he acquired the material gathered by Colonel H. B. Hanna, who had been collecting since 1857. It consisted of paintings and drawings ranging in date from Akbar's time (1556-1605) through the British period and included works from the Mughal, Deccani and provincial schools as well as a few Company drawings.

A portrait (Fig. 7) of Jahangir and his son Khurram, the future Shah Jahan, being feasted by Nur Jahan is a fine example of Imperial Mughal taste and judging by the number of later copies, a popular motif. As pointed out by Milo Beach,[3] a number of later versions are known, but this work of around 1620 is the earliest. Especially notable are the details of the architectural decoration, with paintings of flowers and panels showing portraits of the Virgin Mary, the result of European works collected at the Mughal court. Such fully painted walls no longer exist today in India.



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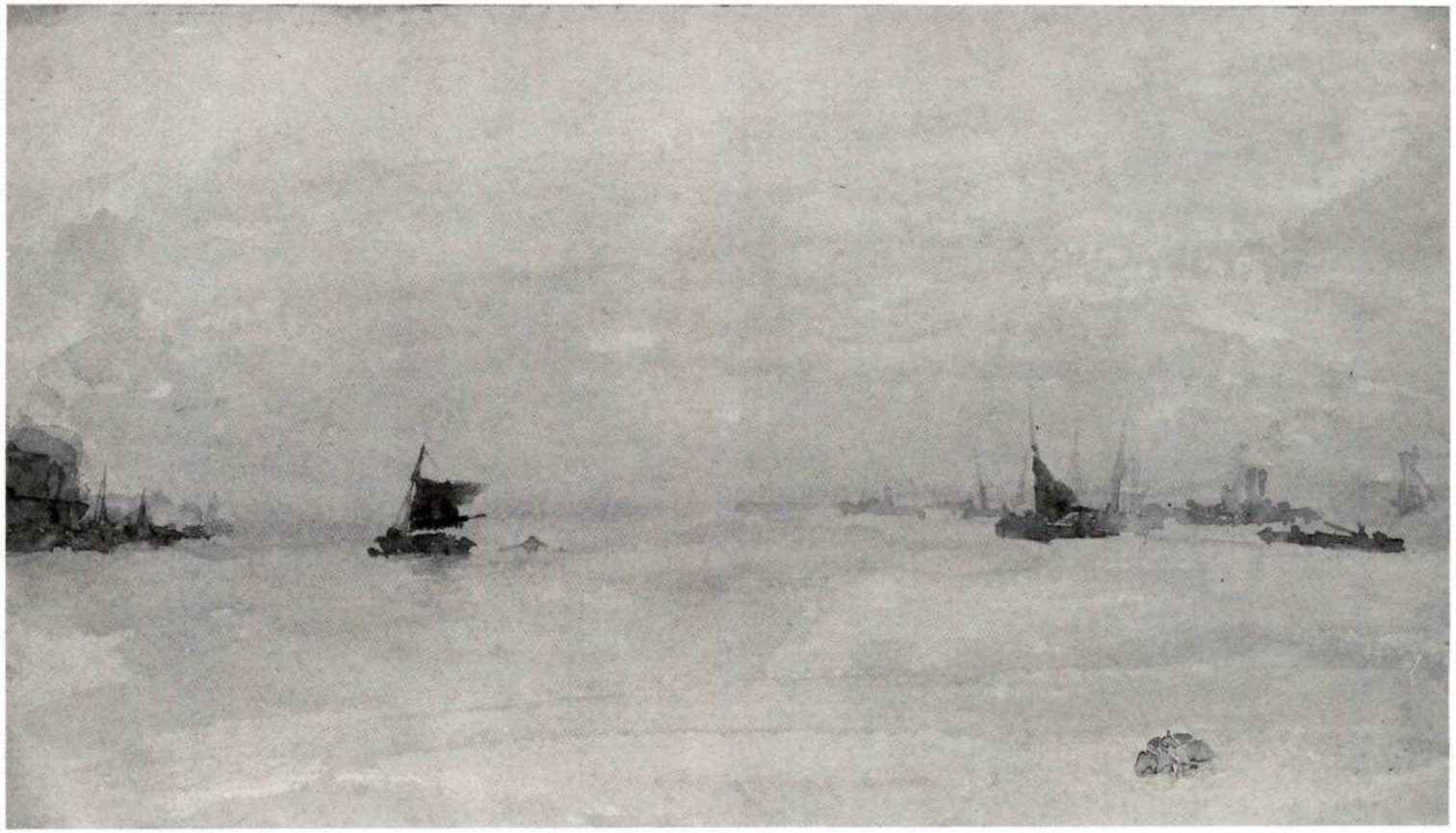

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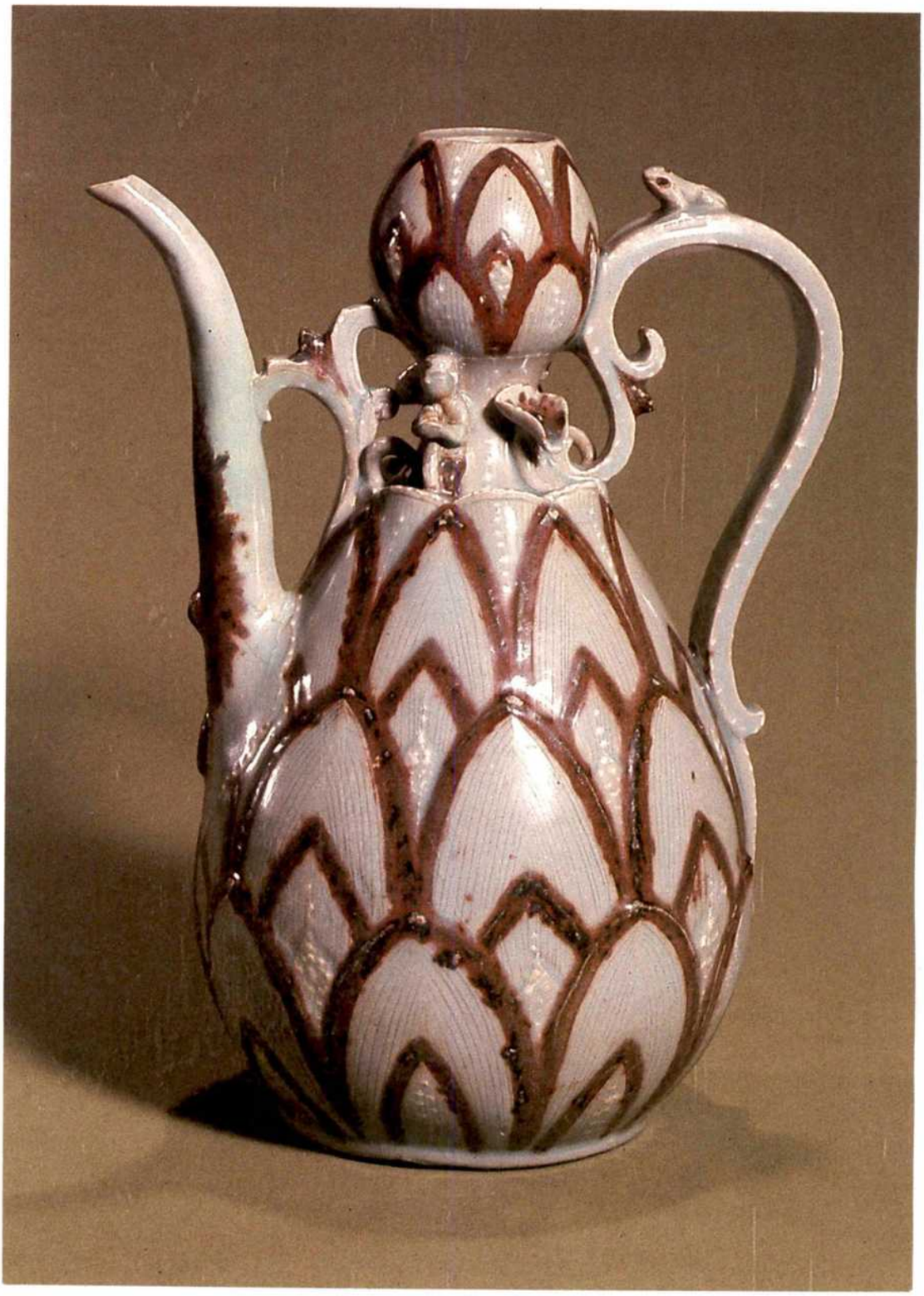
4

3 "Grey and Silver: The Mersey"
by James Abbott McNeill
Whistler
1880s
Watercolor on paper
15 cm. x 27.2 cm.
(Acc. no. 89.3)
The subtle tones reflect the type of Oriental painting favored by Freer. This is the first painting by Whistler to be acquired by Freer.

4 "Grass-Thatched Huts by an Inlet" by Kano Tan'yu
Edo Period, 1602-74
Ink and color on silk
30.5 cm. x 44.8 cm.
(Acc. no. 04.370)
This type of painting, with its subtle tones, was similar to the works of Freer's friend Whistler and became dominant in Freer's taste in collecting.

5 "Lohans Laundering" by
Lin Tinggui
China
Southern Song Dynasty, 1178
Ink and color on silk
11.8 cm. x 53.1 cm.
(Acc. no. 02.224)
This is one of the 100 scrolls portraying the 500 Lohan. In 1907 Freer acquired another from this set.

5



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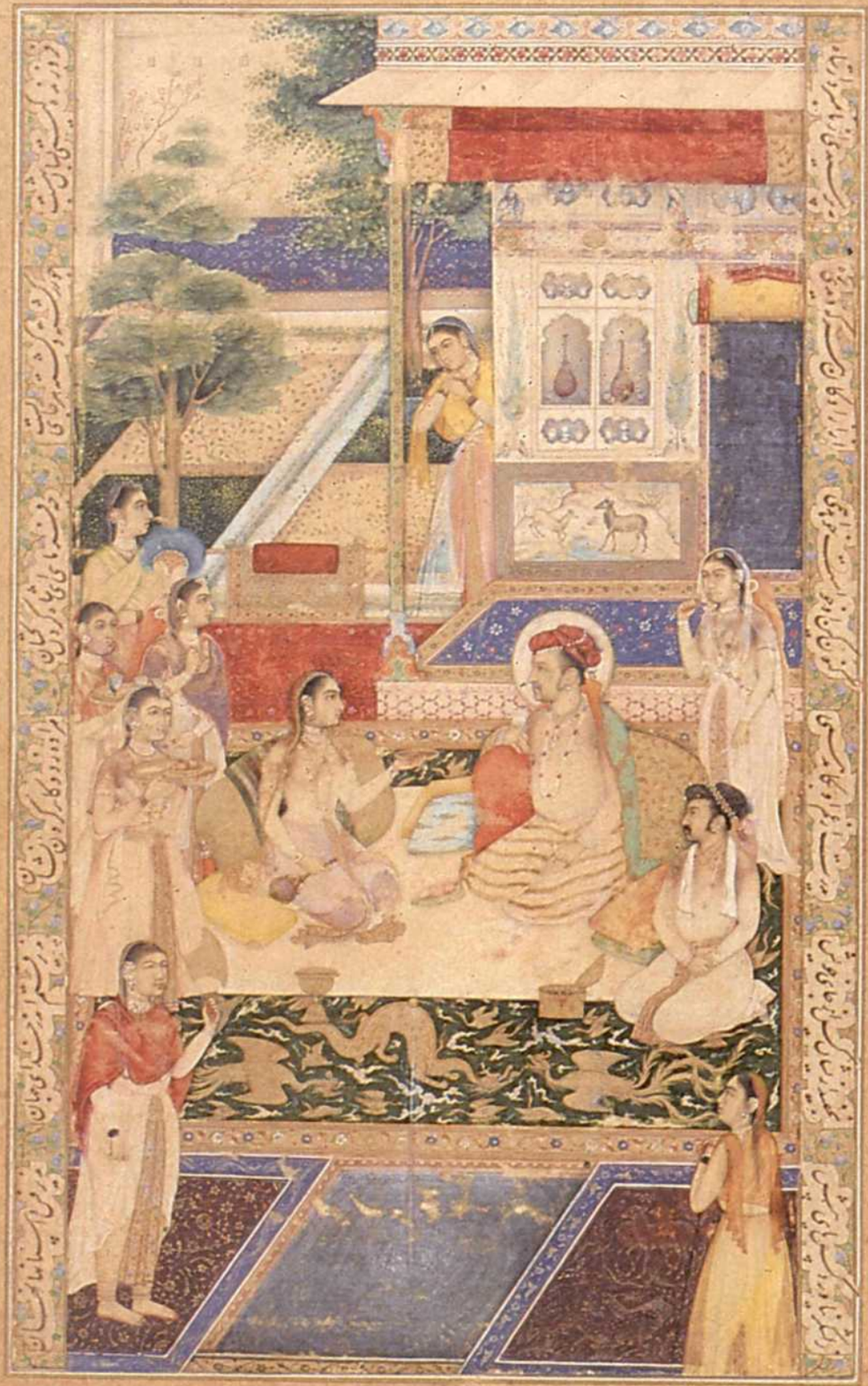
6 "Ewer"
Korea
Koryo Dynasty, 13th century
Celadon with copper-red underglaze and white slip decoration
30.5 cm. x 16.7 cm.
(Acc. no. 15.50)
The Koreans pioneered the use of copper-red decoration and their celadons were admired from their earliest appearance by the neighboring Chinese.

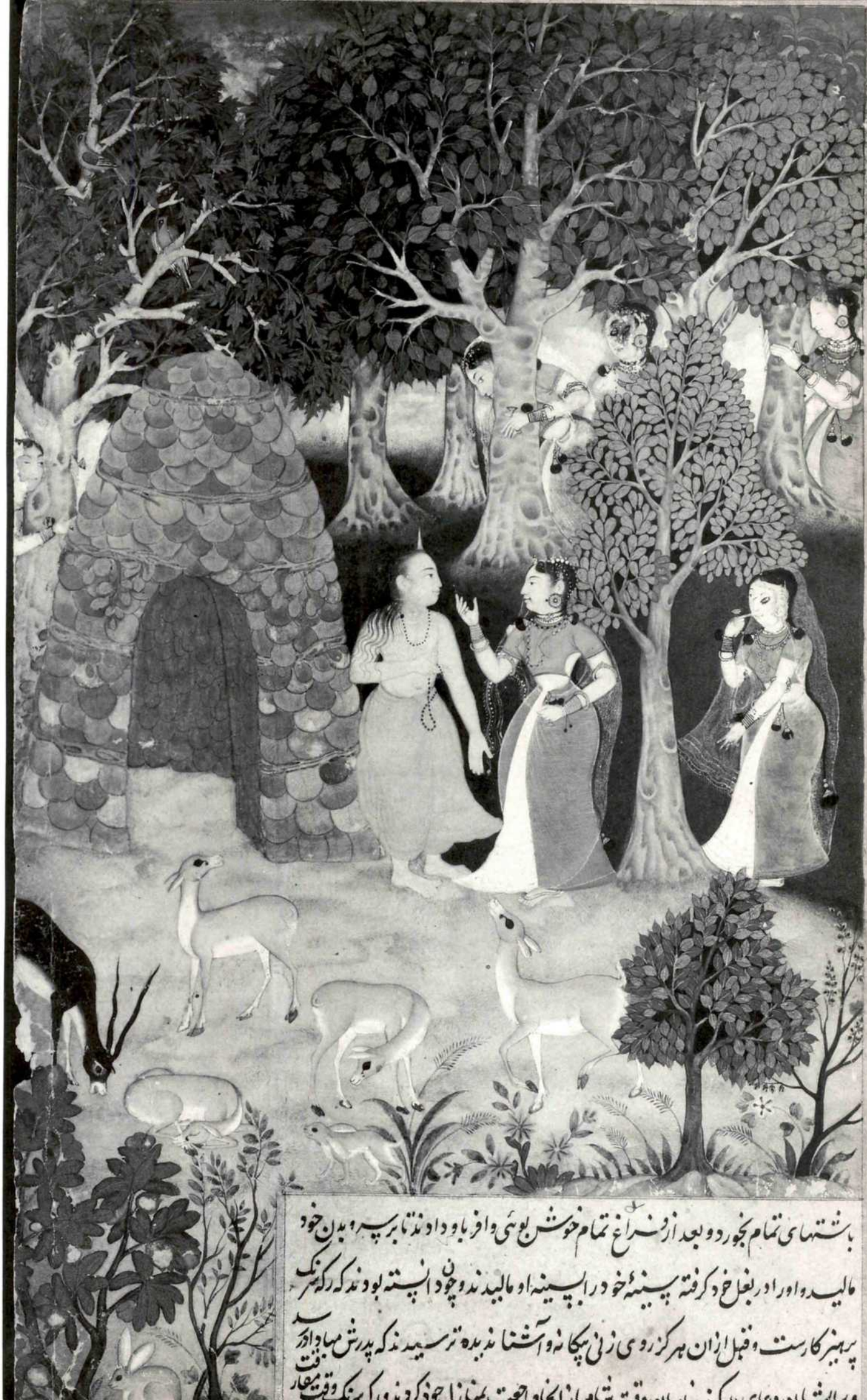
7 "Jahangir and Prince Khurram Feasted by Nur Jahan"
India
Mughal period, ca.1620
Gouache on paper
25.2 cm. x 14.2 cm.
(Acc. no. 07.258)
Taken from an album once owned by the son of Emperor Jahangir, this includes two small heads of the Virgin Mary, as part of the mural decoration on the pavilion walls, copied from European sources.



8 "Rama and Lakshman Battle the Demon Rakshasas" by Mohan
India
Dated 1587-98
Gouache on paper
27.5 cm. x 15.2 cm.
(Acc. no. 07.271-38V)
Here the hero from the *Ramayana* defeats two gigantic demons.

9 "A Group of Dancing Girls Sent to Entice the Youthful Ascetic, Rishyashringa" by Govardhan
India
Dated 1587-98
Gouache on paper
27.5 cm. x 15.2 cm.
(Acc. no. 07.271-19R)
This is one of 130 illustrations in a manuscript made for one of the leading nobles of the court of Akbar.

8



باشتهای تمام بخورد و بعد از فراغ تمام خوش بوئی وافر باو دادند تا بر سر و بدن خود
مالید و او را در بغل خود گرفته سینهٔ خود را بسینه او مالیدند و چون دانسته بودند که رگه سرنگ
پرهیزکارست و قبل ازان هرگز روی زنی بیگانه و آشنا ندیده ترسیدند که پدرش مبادا در رسد
[illegible] وقت مفارقت

10 "Throne Leg"
Orissa, India
13th century
Ivory
35 cm.
(Acc. no. 07.8)
A *gajasimha* is shown about to kill a demon or warrior dangling from his trunk.

11 "Durga"
Java
Central Period, 9th century
Stone
Size not known
(Acc. no. 14.54)
Freer collected few sculptures from Southeast Asia and here is perhaps the finest example, from the great period of Javanese culture.

12 "Musicians and Dancers" attributed to Mirza Muhammed al-Huseyni
Iran
Safavid Period, dated 1613
Black line and gold on paper, tinted with red, blue, green and yellow
Drawing alone is 17.3 cm. x 9.9 cm.
(Acc. no. 07.157)
This is one of a number of Persian and Mughal drawings Freer acquired in 1907.

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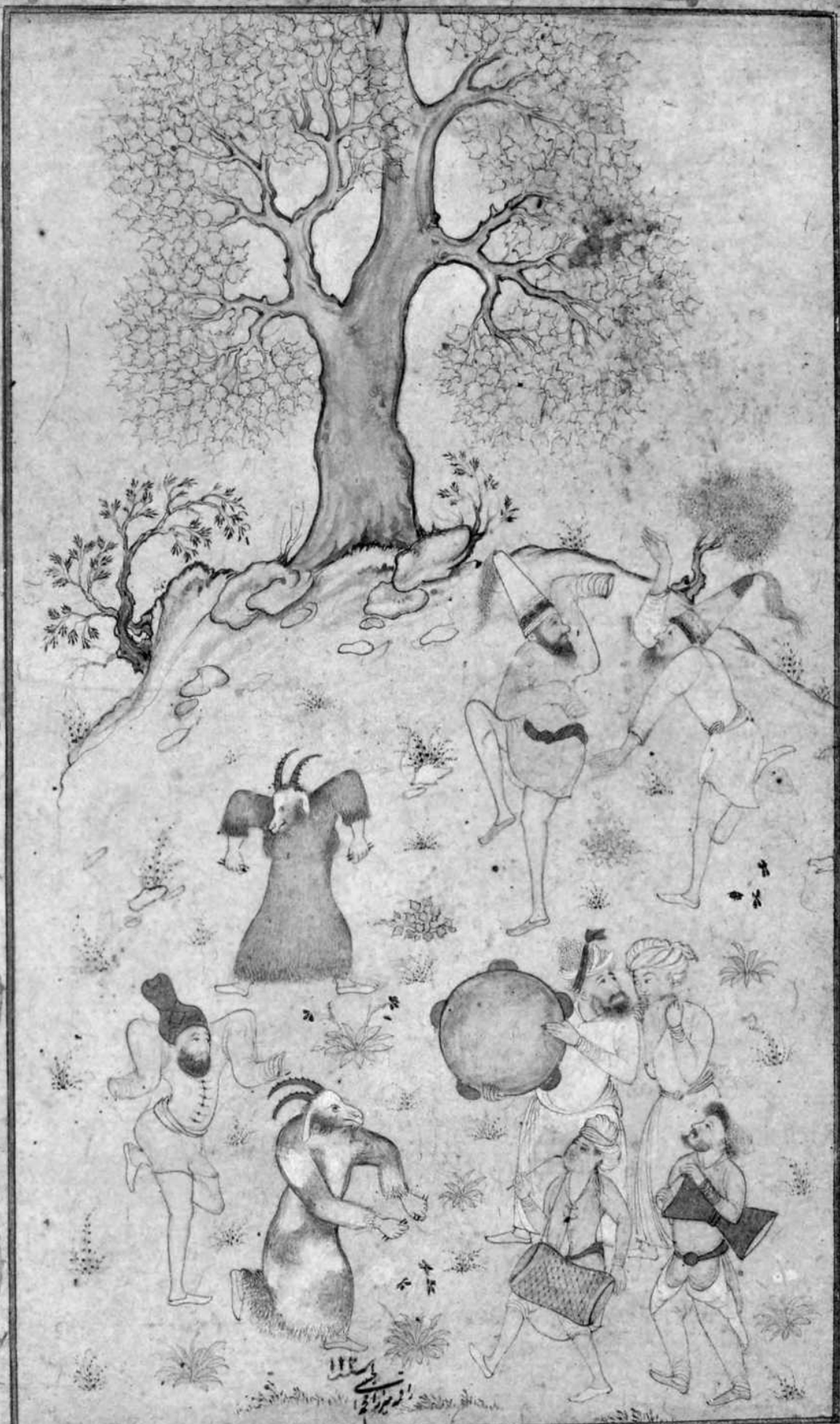

KP-1569

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13 "Bodhisattva"
Japanese
Suiko Period (552-645)
Wood, once covered with lacquer and gold leaf
81.2 cm.
(Acc. no. 09.343)
This rare example of early Japanese sculpture reflects both Korean and Chinese influence.

14 "Admonishing in Chains" (detail)
China
Ming Dynasty, 15th century
Handscroll, ink and color on silk
36.9 cm. x 207.9 cm.
(Acc. no. 11.235)
This important scroll was one of the objects removed from the Imperial Collection in Beijing, during the troubled years of the early 20th century.

15 "Kuan ware vase"
China
Southern Song Dynasty, 12th century
Dark brown stoneware with opaque blue-gray glaze
23.2 cm.
(Acc. no. 11.338)
This rare and important vase was likely an imperial possession and remained for years in the emperor's collection in Beijing.

The most important paintings in the Hanna collection were a series illustrating the *Ramayana*. An inscription places most of them between 1587 and 1598. They are not Imperial Mughal works, being commissioned by a courtier, but do reveal the influence of native Hindu styles upon the art of the fully developed court tradition. The contrast with the portrait of Jahangir being feasted by Nur Jahan, noted above, is dramatic. These *Ramayana* scenes utilize a simple, direct composition, with few of the crowded details that fill most Imperial works. The bold colors and lines bring an immediacy to the works, giving them a dramatic power typical of the Hindu painting tradition. The Hindu artistic taste is especially clear in the scene of Rama and Lakshman battling demons (Fig. 8). The intense orange and green demons and the bold shapes overpower the kind of delicate treatment associated with Mughal taste, as seen in the various animals of Govardhan's painting of the dancing girls (Fig. 9). This blend of two traditions makes these paintings an important document in the development of Indian art.

Also in 1907, Freer acquired an ivory Orissan throne leg (Fig. 10). This thirteenth century masterpiece of delicate carving represents a rampant *gajasimha* or *gajavirala* (elephant-lion) killing a demon, shown dangling from his trunk. It is carved fully around, with an elaborate lion's mane on the back and a pair of horse and rider figures along the base. In 1914 he purchased a stone sculpture, related to the Indian tradition. This image of Durga (Fig. 11) is datable to the ninth century and follows an earlier South Indian tradition for portrayals of this goddess. In the majority of Central Indonesian examples Durga is shown with eight arms, and this four-armed version is likely to be from East Java, where that type seemed to dominate.[4]

He acquired Indian and Persian drawings as early as 1907 and continued to gather them until his death. This was yet another example of discriminating taste, for there were few collections of this art at that early date. The delicacy of the line work must have coincided with Freer's love of East Asian brush painting. As always, his connoisseurship enabled him to see beyond national boundaries and select quality wherever he found it. Among his Near Eastern objects were several ceramics, including a Safavid white porcelain, acquired in 1903, a Seljuk ewer of the twelfth or thirteenth century (1909), and a drawing dated 1613 (Fig. 12), acquired in 1907.

Before his last trip to Asia, in 1910-1911, Freer already had amassed a collection notable for its range and quality. Among his prized possessions: from Japan were more than 30

16 "Pensive Bodhisattva"
China
Northern Qi Dynasty,
6th century
White marble
33 cm.
(Acc. no. 11.411)
This pose has puzzled scholars, many attributing it to the bodhisattva of the future, Maitreya, contemplating his mission yet to come. It can be found among early Indian images as far back as the 1st and 2nd century but is most popular among Chinese works of the Six Dynasties Period (5th-6th century).

16

final sketches by Hokusai (bought from the dealer Tomkinson in 1907), two Kamakura paintings of Jizo, one a scroll of miracles and the other of Jizo with the Ten Kings of Hell, a decorated plate by Kenzan and an early wooden sculpture of a bodhisattva (Fig. 13) from the seventh century, acquired in 1909 and a beautiful inlaid lacquer box, got in 1904. In addition to the ceramics from the Allen collection, his Korean holdings included an excellent Koryo (907-1392) painting of Amitabha and the Eight Bodhisattvas.

His Last Trip to Asia

In 1910 he sailed again to Asia, for what was to be his most memorable and unfortunately his last opportunity, due to declining health. On September 11 he arrived in Shanghai and looked

at Chinese paintings and ceramics that same day. Three days later he sailed for Qinqdao and then on to Beijing. After a month there he went by railroad to Kaifeng, a favorite city often noted in his diaries. He made a side trip to the Gongxian caves and then a more difficult adventure to Longmen. Those caves were known as a hiding place for bandits and Freer was accompanied by his own armed guard. As random gunfire was considered to be a prudent deterrent, the nights were continuously punctuated by his guards firing their weapons as warning to any bandits in the area. His own diary contains a vivid account of the trials of that visit:

> "En route here my photographer was stoned and received one ugly blow over his right eye, but Pond's Extract put him back in harness again today, although the dropping of a pin now startles him. My cook sleeps with the new bread knife I bought in Peking, my interpreter wraps countless blankets around him when he lies down, the photographer never sleeps, my servant wept last night when the temple cat mewed outside; so if the brigands overpower the guard, I shall dive under the folding cot."[5]

Freer and his party did take valuable photographs of this site, for subsequently many of the sculptures were stolen and these photos enable scholars to have some idea of what was once there. They are part of the Freer archives, available today in the gallery library. He was unable to continue on for the planned visits to Sian, due to flooding, or the Yonqqang caves, for his crew refused to risk the dangers just experienced at Longmen. They returned instead to Beijing. At Christmas time he went to Mukden to visit palace collections, then Dairen and Port Arthur, from which he sailed to Shanghai. He was fortunate to see the famous collection of Pang Yuan ji and made several purchases from him, including a fifteenth century Ming painting once in the Imperial Collection in Beijing: Chen Yuanda Admonishing Liu Cong" (Fig. 14). He also acquired his famous Song period Guoxi scroll from this same dealer. He ended this trip with a pleasurable barge ride from Shanghai to Hangchow, then returned via railroad. In February of 1911 he sailed for Nagasaki and home.

The objects obtained from this last trip greatly enriched his Chinese collection. Among the many should be mentioned a Six Dynasties Buddhist bronze, dated to A.D. 451, a Song Guan ware mallet vase (Fig. 15) that is of the highest quality and rarity, likely an imperial piece, and acquired for a mere $25 and a fourteenth century Yuan painting of a guardian. He also acquired a fine Northern Qi (sixth century) stone seated bodhisattva, in the pensive pose with the right leg across the other knee and the right hand touching the cheek (Fig. 16).

Freer did not collect a great many Chinese ritual bronzes. Although the gallery is now famous for having one of the world's premier collections, most were added after Freer's time. He did gather a number along the way, and made precise notes about them. These notes reveal both his discerning eye as well as his limitations in what is one of the most difficult areas of connoisseurship. For one Shang *zun*, acquired in 1909, Freer attached a note urging that it be carefully studied, for he doubted its authenticity. It has indeed been found to be of recent origin. Yet another *zun*, acquired in China in 1915, stands as a superb example of its type. During that same trip he acquired a *jue* that research has proven to be of modern date, yet Freer's notes express great admiration for what he felt was a very important piece. Another ritual bronze, a Shang *gui*, bought in 1894 and one of his earliest Asian pieces, was thought by Freer to be a fake. Research has found it to be an authentic Shang bronze. In 1915 he acquired an important pictorial bronze (Fig. 17), of the Late Zhou period, dating from the fifth century B.C., part of a group of vessels that embody the earliest evidence of the first pictorial art of China.

In spite of declining health (he had suffered a stroke by 1908) Freer kept actively collecting. He was often bedridden during his last years, yet eagerly supervised the opening of crates that came from all over the world, making notes about the contents and keeping a close eye upon the plans for his gallery soon to be built in Washington, D.C. During these last years he became increasingly interested in Chinese jade, as if following the ancient Chinese belief in the healing powers of this wondrous stone.

Though unable to travel to Asia or even to Europe during his final years, he acquired many outstanding pieces. For example, a Late Zhou (early third century B.C.) *bianhu* (Fig. 18) shows the finest inlaid work of the last epoch of the age of Chinese bronzes. A stone bodhisattva, of Tang date (eighth century), a masterpiece of this golden age of Chinese civilization, was purchased in 1916. Another exceptional sculpture, purchased a year earlier, is a Northern Qi funerary base, important for its blend of Chinese and Central Asian motifs. A sensitive portrait of a lohan, from fourteenth century Yuan China, exemplifies the brilliance of Chinese portraiture. In 1914 he acquired his best known Chinese painting, "Nymph of the Lo River," (Fig. 19) from the Chinese scholar John C. Ferguson.

His Gift to the Nation

Despite the value and unique qua ity of his collection it was not immediately accepted by the U.S. congress. He first offered it to the government in 1904 and the reaction was one of

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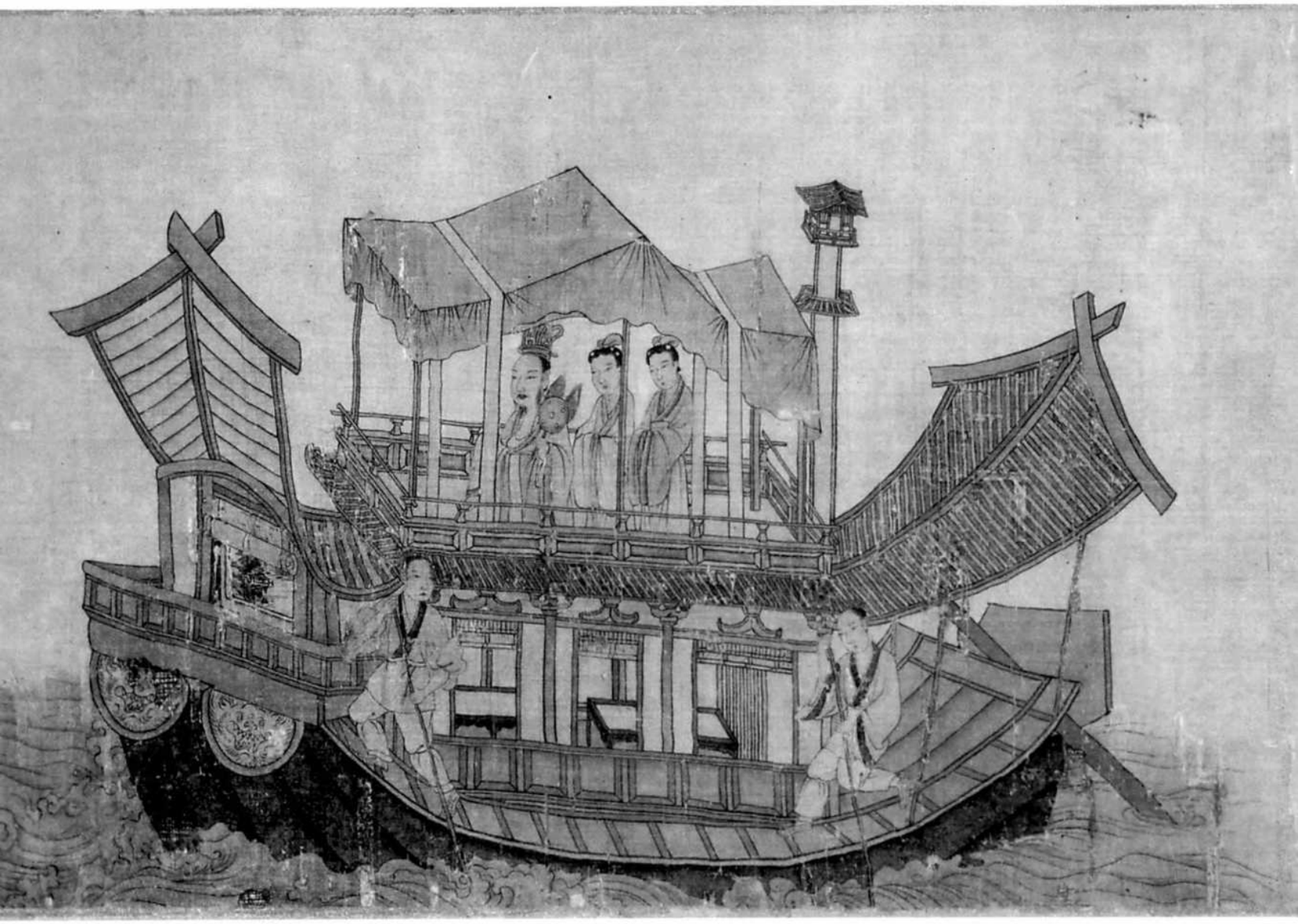

17 Jian
China
Late Zhou Period, early 5th century B.C.
Ritual bronze basin with intaglio decorations
28 cm. x 61 cm.
(Acc. no. 15.107)
The designs on these ritual bronze vessels are the oldest known examples of early Chinese pictorial art, reflecting paintings that no longer exist.

18 Bianhu
China
Late Zhou Period, late 4th-early 3rd century B.C.
Silver inlaid bronze vessel
31.2 cm. x 30.5 cm.
(Acc. no. 15.103)
Despite the geometric, stylized designs, there is still association with the earlier symbols of dragons and birds that marked the centuries of decoration upon ritual bronzes.

19 Nymph of the Lo River (detail)
China
Southern Song Dynasty, 12th-13th century
Handscroll, ink and color on silk
24 cm. x 310 cm.
(Acc. no. 14.53)
This famous scroll illustrates a poem of the 3rd century and copies the style of one of China's early masters, Gu Kaizhi.

18

19

uncertainty and delays. In typical bureaucratic fashion, a congressional committee was formed to study the proposal. Their progress was slow, despite favorable reports, visits to see the works in Detroit and Freer's generous offer of funds to build the gallery and an endowment to support its activities. This was the first significant gift of art ever received by the U.S. government, and without a precedent and little or no familiarity with Asian art, there is small wonder at delays. Ultimately, President Theodore Roosevelt applied the necessary pressure and the gift was officially accepted in 1906. At the time of Freer's death, in 1919, the collection was valued at $7,000,000.

Unfortunately, Freer did not live to see the opening of the gallery bearing his name; due in part to the interruption of World War I, it was not finished until 1923. He placed several interesting restrictions upon the gift: no loans were to be made to or from the collection (an especially sore point for Freer as he had often gone to a museum only to find desired objects out on loan), a special arrangement was to be made for students and scholars to be able to view any of the objects not on view (a popular rule for visitors today since space limitations restrict the display to less than 10% of the entire collection), no objects could be removed, and nothing more could be added to the American section.

Today the Freer collection is more balanced, richer and nearly three times the size of that formed originally. This is the result of careful purchases and enlightened leadership during the sixty plus years since its opening. Particular attention has been given to acquiring the finest objects reflecting Charles Freer's taste and discrimination. He certainly acquired objects that reflected his personal taste, remaining true to his esthetic beliefs.

Looking over his purchases one can discern several dominant traits. First and foremost is a high level of quality. His lack of formal training did not limit his ability to select the finest objects. If one compares the enormous hordes of material amassed by other early collectors, such as Morgan or William Randolph Hearst, it is difficult not to appreciate the cautious selectivity of Freer. Throughout his collection there is also a thread or theme, an emphasis upon surfaces and subtle colors[6], much as found in the work of his friend Whistler. Specifically, his collection of Rimpa school paintings is very strong and these works reflect his refined taste and love of delicate nuances of color tonalities. His preference for ceramics of the tea ceremony over the then popular Chinese porcelains also reflects this feeling for surface treatment, harmony and subtle texture. Judging by the list of objects it would appear that Freer by and large preferred two dimensional art to sculpture, although his group of Chinese Buddhist images is of greatest importance. This is borne out by a review of two Freer Gallery publications, both published in recent times, one on ritual bronzes[7] and another on Chinese figure painting.[8] Most of the objects in the bronzes volume were acquired after his death while over two-thirds of the Chinese figure paintings were purchased by Freer. Likewise, most of the Indian art now owned by the Freer Gallery came after his time. He may also have been affected, in a negative way, by some of the current tastes of his day. For example, elaborate and late Chinese ceramics, though popular with others, hardly interested him, and he seemed to have little enthusiasm for Chinese porcelains in general. He collected the popular Japanese woodblock prints from 1894 to 1904, but soon thereafter sold them, keeping instead some of the actual blocks and excellent examples of ukiyo-e school painting and drawings.

When one enters the Freer Gallery today, it is clear that both the design of the building, the careful details of the installation and the quality of the objects added since his time all harmonize with his taste. It is a remarkable tribute to the accuracy of his eye, to the singular devotion of his career, that so many years and so many objects later, the total impression is still so like the man who founded it all.

FOOTNOTES

1 Aline Saarinen, 1958, *The Proud Possessors*, New York: Random House, p. 119.
2 G. St. G. M. Gompertz, 1968, *Celadon Wares*, London: Faber and Faber, p. 21.
3 Milo Beach, "Colonel Hanna's Indian Paintings," *Apollo*, 1983, no. 258, August, p. 154.
4 Aschwin Lippe, 1970, *The Freer Indian Sculptures*, Washington, p. 26.
5 John A. Pope, 1972, *The Freer Gallery of Art: China*, Tokyo: Kodansha Ltd., p. 12.
6 As pointed out by David Park Curry in *Apollo*, 1983, August, p. 174.
7 John A. Pope, et al, 1967, *The Freer Chinese Bronzes: vol. I, Catalogue*, Washington.
8 Thomas Lawton, 1973, *Chinese Figure Painting*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

NOTE: For information on Freer, the archives in the Freer Gallery include his diaries and correspondence and this has been studied in a thesis by Helen Nebeker Tomlinson, *Charles Lang Freer, Pioneer Collector of Oriental Art*, 2 vols., 1982. An excellent compilation of Freer as a collector, is found in *Apollo*, vol. CXVIII, no. 258, August 1983, pp. 118-183. The Indian sculptures, most acquired after Freer's time, are studied in a monograph by Aschwin Lippe, *The Freer Indian Sculptures*, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1970. The Mughal paintings are discussed in Milo Beach, *The Imperial Image*, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1981. Useful information is contained in a survey of his Korean collection by Ann Yonemura, "Korean Art in the Freer Gallery of Art," *Korean Culture*, vol. 4, no. 2, June 1983, pp. 5-15. Aline B. Saarinen devotes a chapter to Freer in her book: *The Proud Possessors*, 1958, New York: Random House, pp. 118-143. Various Freer catalogues give some information, including those by the current director, Thomas Lawton, who was most generous in supplying material and answering questions for this article.

AVERY BRUNDAGE

(1887-1975)

Clarence F. Shangraw

"Avery is thrilled."

On June 10, 1966, Elizabeth Dunlap Brundage capsulized the elation of her husband, Avery Brundage, upon the occasion of their 6,000 item collection of Asian art finally being permanently open to the public in a San Francisco museum. The museum collection would later become known as the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection, and their two subsequent collections (an additional 3,000 items were assembled between 1961 and 1976) would become the nucleus for the museum that serves as a "Gateway to the Orient."

1 A Ritual Vessel, type *fangyi* with animal mask decoration
China
Late Shang period (13th-11th century B.C.)
Bronze
h: 22.86 cm.
(B60 B644)

A Half-Lifetime of Collecting

Avery Brundage, known affectionately to his extended museum family as "Mr. B," spent over half a lifetime on his collecting passion. Mrs. Brundage, of course, shared his interests and would always express her opinions to him privately, but she preferred to leave the limelight of the successful collector to him. He would often, with his marvelously quizzical, smirking smile, wisecrack about his collecting habits, "It's not a hobby, it's a disease. I've been broke ever since I purchased my first object." Nevertheless, the Chicago businessman and self-made millionaire always somehow found additional funds from his multifarious business activities for his purchases. He admitted in resignation, "my collection will never be complete," but in attempting to attain the goal, like the true Olympic competitor he was, Avery Brundage did, according to many, amass the greatest private collection of Asian art in the world. For instance, Laurence Sickman, Director Emeritus of Kansas City's famed Nelson Gallery of Art, said in 1960 when the collection was being offered to San Francisco, "There is good reason to believe that the objects of Asian art offered to San Francisco by Avery Brundage comprise the last comprehensive collection in this field that can be assembled in our time."[1]

As kings and emperors acknowledged by citation Avery Brundage's distinguished contributions to amateur sports as International Olympic Committee President from 1952-1972, he has been likewise recognized world-wide by the leaders in the museum profession and the world of art connoisseurship for his passion-flavored-with-pragmatics in collecting Asian art. Thomas Hoving, former Metropolitan Museum of Art Director, recently ranked the top 100 art collectors in America.[2] His criteria in ranking consisted of discriminating taste, visionary courage, breadth of interest and public-spiritedness. Mr. B's passion and vision deservedly earned him a spot in the top thirty, along with Charles Lang Freer (included in this volume) and Arthur Sackler, two other eminent collectors of Asian art.

Who was this man and how could he—one person—conceivably succeed so astonishingly in such a remarkable undertaking?

Avery Brundage was born September 28, 1887, abandoned by his father at age 3, and raised by his working mother and members of her family. He did well in school and excelled in competitive sports. After graduation from the University of Illinois with an engineering degree in 1909, he competed in the 1912 Stockholm Olympics. This European trip, his first, spurred his interest in souvenir collecting, especially postage stamps. After becoming US all-round amateur champion in 1914, 1916 and 1918, he was selected to serve on the US Olympic delegation. His duties on that delegation entailed further travels, particularly to Asia, and gave fire to his inquisitive and acquisitive interests in the cultures and arts of the Orient. This exposure had such an impact on him, that not only would he become a prodigious collector of Asian art, but, in addition, he would later become a declared believer in Daoism.

His Origins of Collecting

Mr. B's initial purchases were Japanese woodblock prints, then fashionable in the West, and *netsuke,* miniature carvings that serve as toggles on a man's kimono sash. He later commented, "I don't remember which object I got first. I probably discarded it anyway, because my taste has improved since those early days of collecting." In *netsuke* he found the perfect synthesis of his two passions for amateurism and Asian art. At a 1972 conference in Japan, he remarked, "Originally the *netsuke* were carved with loving care for personal use. The carver conceived the design and built something of himself into the object. It may have taken him six months, but . . . . it bore the stamp of his own personality. He was an amateur carver . . .". Comparing the workmanship of early *netsuke* carvers to later carvers, Mr. B continued that the later *netsuke* were "ordinarily cold, stiff and without imagination . . . missing was the love and devotion of the amateur carver, which causes these older *netsuke* to be esteemed more highly by the collector than the commercial ones carved expressly for money." These comments succinctly illustrate Mr. Brundage's personal philosophy that success in any field comes about from the devotion of the unknown amateur, whether craftsman, collector or competitor in his quest for perfection.

Then, a major turning point in his collecting career occurred in 1935. Although he, of course, had been aware of the famous Chinese art exhibitions in Amsterdam in 1927 and Berlin in 1929, it was the Burlington House Exhibition in London in 1935 that stoked the smoldering fire. That exhibition provided Avery Brundage with directional focus, for he

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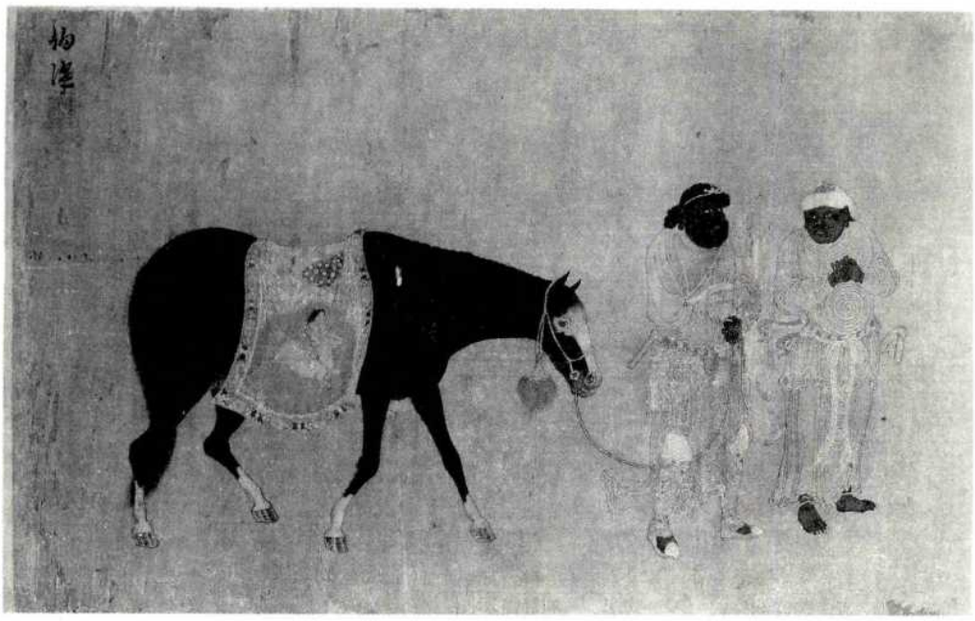

2a

2 a, b "Tribute Horses," by Ren Bowen (active mid-14th century):— details
China
Yuan dynasty (14th century A.D.)
Handscroll, ink and colors on silk
h: 36.83 cm., l: 220.35 cm.
(B60 D100)

was soon feverishly acquiring Chinese art, in particular Chinese ritual bronzes. As his interests broadened and deepened, he intensively studied, acquired, eliminated, and concentrated on groups or series of objects. On his innumerable Olympian travels, he methodically visited museums, sought out collectors of similar interests and developed an international network of reliable, respected dealers in Asian art. Simultaneously, he was in constant communication with Asian art specialists in Europe and Japan, as well as in the US. Mr. B's personal archives, now at the Asian Art Museum, are replete with inquiries to, and comments from, specialists he had befriended throughout the world. Though he would often differ with the experts' opinions, those that he became most fond of he would take to sports events just as he took athletes to museums. Avery Brundage staunchly advocated the Olympic concept of the universal man, in sports and culture, an ideal that prompted him, undoubtedly, to become the prime mover in the re-establishment of the Cultural Olympics in Rome in 1960.

A Significant Turning Point

That 1935 Burlington House Exhibition of Chinese art had been particularly significant since it was the first time that the Chinese government had participated in an international art exhibition. British collectors, of course, had led in the study and collecting of Chinese ceramics and decorative arts in the West. The impact of that 1935 exhibition on Mr. B was so emphatic that more than sixty objects of unsurpassed quality in that show (then in

2b

3 Fish Jar
China
Mark and Reign of Ming Jiajing (1522-1566 A.D.)
White porcelain with *wucai* (five-color) enamels
h: 43.18 cm., diam: 43.18 cm.
(B60 P78+)

private collections) were subsequently purchased by him.

The 3,000 year old bronze ritual vessels from China in that show particularly intrigued collector Brundage. He found in them the perfection of the anonymous craftsman, strength and potency mingled with "primitive" spirituality. His interest in Chinese bronzes arose at a most fortuitous time both in his collecting career and in China's history. China had undertaken its first scientifically-controlled archaeology only as recently as 1927, and the extensive construction of railroads in North China in the 1930s were turning up innumerable tombs, rich in ancient bronzes and other artifacts. Whenever such objects appeared in the international market, Avery Brundage would purchase them, if their quality met his standards. Many of those objects would later become among the most important holdings of his collection. But he would not purchase indiscriminately, realizing, as do all serious collectors, that replicas and outright forgeries abound. Thus, he became a dedicated student, accumulating an extensive library on Asian art and archaeology invariably finding time during his 18 to 20 hour workday to devote to the pursuit of his real passion.

By 1949, when a selection of his ancient Chinese ritual vessels (Fig. 1), were displayed at the Chicago Art Institute (of which Mr. B was a dedicated trustee), then curator Charles Fabens Kelley remarked, "It would be difficult to deceive him (Mr. Brundage) now in the field of Chinese bronzes. He has evolved a study score sheet which covers the ground so thoroughly that only a bronze of undoubted authenticity and artistic merit can survive the ordeal."[3] Many dealers soon accepted this, and thereafter offered him only the best and unquestioned for his examination and consideration.

Typically we often find in his correspondence to prospective sellers the comment, "You've got to be realistic about your prices. Remember my motto: highest quality, lowest price." (He once commented facetiously that the iconographic formula which depicts the Infant Buddha's First Seven Steps, with one finger pointing toward the sky and the other toward the ground, appropriately reflected his purchasing policy.)

Expansion of Interest and His Analytic Tools

During the late 1940s and 1950s, Mr. Brundage's interests expanded componentially outside his nuclear interests in Chinese art to embrace the arts of Korea, Japan, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia and the Near East. These new involvements were reflected in a loan exhibition of sixty-five Asian sculptures at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art in 1956, his first visual expression of his "dream of creating a great public museum of Oriental Arts, preferably here on the West Coast."[4]

Avery Brundage was a well-organized, methodical collector. Visiting dealers he would make lists of objects of interest to him, writing down a brief description of each on any available scrap of paper. Those notes and jotted lists survive as highly illuminating sources of how this incomparable collector went about his task. He would scribble down the brief description, often with an aesthetic rating (a system the museum still respects by continuing its use), often commenting on its condition, and the price. He would seldom, if ever make an on-the-spot decision about a potential purchase, preferring to "think about it." Later, that evening or the next morning, he would check over the list; any object he could not recall vividly would be summarily crossed off the list. The list would then go through another review, and after several days of this he would make his final selection of only those objects which had left an indelible impression on him. Except in rare instances, these jots and notes are undated, but happily, dated companion materials help us to learn when he was doing what and what his refined selection methods were. Among some early 1950s papers is a list of objects on a piece of cheap, dog-eared and ragged manila-rag paper, with a reminder written in the margin to check how many, if any, Chinese steles are still available at a certain dealer. Following that is another note, perhaps in reference to the list of objects under consideration: "Study all items carefully. 1st aesthetic value. Is it a work of art? 2. importance – worthy of my collection. 3. rarity 4. shape – appearance – design. 5. Details 6. Workmanship 7. Condition 8. (left blank)". Essentially, collector Brundage was doing exactly what every museum curator *must* do when considering the acquisition of an important object of art. Even before contemplating a museum as a repository for his collection, he was employing impeccable curatorial analytical tools!

The Museum Search and Its Rewards

During the 1950s, Mr. Brundage started looking for a permanent home for his internationally acclaimed, broadly representative and nearly comprehensive collection, and as a trustee of the Chicago Art Institute, he first offered his entire collection to that institution. But the Chicago director and curator felt it could not absorb all five thousand items. Mr. Brundage was, to say the least, reluctant to fragment a collection that he had devoted over twenty years assembling and he began a characteristically intense search for a home for his treasures. After a five-year, not always tranquil courtship, San Francisco city and museum officials at last accepted Mr. Brundage's largesse. The city, eager for the collection, floated a special civic bond issue which the voters approved by an overwhelming majority after having seen a preview of a special exhibition of 100 selected objects from his collection. After that

resoundingly affirmative approval, Chinatown restaurants jubilantly passed out Fortune Cookies with the message, "Thank you, Mr. Brundage."

As late as 1960, the collection had not yet been catalogued and Mr. B himself admitted he did not know exactly how many objects he had assembled. He was continually upgrading it and besides, the collection was dispersed, stored in his hotel and apartment in Chicago and at his home in Santa Barbara, as well as items still with vendors. With the initial assistance of Victor Merlo and then Jan Fontein (now the Director of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts), the collection was brought together under one roof in San Francisco and thoroughly check-listed and catalogued for the first time. In 1963, after Fontein's return to the Rijksmuseum, Yvon d'Argencé, formerly associated with museums in Paris and Vietnam and then professor of art history at UC Berkeley, assumed a consultant's role. Until 1985 he was the Director and Chief Curator of the museum and the Brundage Collection. In 1964, d'Argencé employed three curatorial-research assistants—Yoshiko Kakudo, Huang Woan-jen and myself. Huang shortly thereafter returned to Asia and the team was augmented three years later by Terese Tse (Bartholomew) and Sylvia Chen Shangraw, all of whom worked closely with Mr. Brundage until his death in 1976.

His Collection with Curatorial Input

From 1960 through 1975, Mr. Brundage continued to refine and augment his collections in consultation with his curators, filling in his "gaps" while spending more than a million dollars a year on art purchases; (he even paid our salaries on some occasions when the museum funds went dry).

It was during this phase of his collecting career that his finest specimens of Indian and Khmer sculptures were assembled. Equally significant were attempts to add to his celebrated collection of paintings, particularly Chinese. It was an area Mr. Brundage had been reluctant to collect on his own instincts, "having been stung previously by a disreputable dealer." With curatorial persuasion he selected prime examples from the German collection of Victoria Contag, who had been a long-time specialist in the field. Many of her paintings had graced the galleries of Hamburg's Museum für Kunst and Gewerbe. Equally fervent was Mr. Brundage's pursuit of Chinese paintings from another European source, M. Jean-Pierre Dubosc.

This gentleman-collector/specialist/dealer had, since his 1940s diplomatic days in China, assembled an outstanding collection of Chinese paintings. At a time when they were considered unfashionable and deserving only of academic disdain, Dubosc mounted a signal exhibition of Ming and Qing paintings (14th-19th centuries) in New York in 1949.

The exhibition instantly resulted in a metamorphosis of attitudes and tastes concerning later Chinese paintings. In the '60s and '70s, Dubosc, eager to find a permanent home for his paintings sold many of his best examples to Mr. Brundage, including some of the very paintings in the 1949 exhibition that had been responsible for opening people's eyes and minds. In the original 1960 collection, Avery Brundage had only three significant Chinese paintings, of which the 14th century "Tribute Horses," by Ren Bowen remains a stellar specimen (Fig. 2). By the time of his death in 1976, that number had grown to over 120, with emphasis and strength in Ming and Qing masters.[5]

Mr. B's Chinese Art Assemblage

Words can only outline the genius of Mr. Brundage's collecting instincts, goals and successes. Of his magnificent gift to the people of San Francisco (and, indeed, of the world), the Chinese art assemblage must be given center-stage and the main spotlight. With over 4,000 items in his original gift, Chinese art still constitutes over half of his museum collection. Over 1,500 examples of ceramics comprehensively span all epochs from prehistory to the modern day so that a complete history of Chinese ceramics could be written and illustrated solely with items from his collection. Particularly strong are the Han (206 B.C.-220 A.D.) tomb models and Tang (618-906 A.D.) tomb figurines, the monochromes of the "Five Official Wares" of Song (960-1279 A.D.) and the quintessential Imperial wares from the Ming (1368-1644 A.D.) (Fig. 3) and Qing (1644-1912 A.D.) eras.

One thousand two hundred diverse jades exemplify 5,000 years of production, a diversity probably unparalleled by any other collection under one roof in the world (Fig. 4). His more than six hundred world-famous archaic ritual bronzes include the largest known group of pre-Anyang specimens outside China (Fig. 5). Contrary to most specialists' advice, Mr. Brundage insisted that these rarities would someday prove to be "very important," and they are, of course, just that, having been fully substantiated by supportive archaeological discoveries made in China since 1950. His most celebrated bronze vessel is in the naturalistic shape of a rhinoceros (Fig. 6). Created in the 11th century B.C., it has been associated with the sacrificial rites of the late Shang ruler. It is now the deserved emblem of the museum and consistently charms a million visitors a year.

Over three hundred sculptures in stone, bronze and other media from the 4th to the 19th century reflect all major sculptural currents and styles in China. Among them is the famous 338 A.D. Buddha, (Fig. 7) the world's oldest known dated Chinese Buddha figure. Also significant are Buddhist sculptures from such well-known cave temples as Xiangtangshan,

4 Group of Chinese Jade Ornaments
Warring States period, 5th-3rd century B.C.
Top: Bird-shaped pinherd, h: 3.81 cm., (B60 J815)
Left: Openworked dragon pendant, l: 9.53 cm., (B60 J679)
Right: Bi-disc with rampant dragons, w: 5.72 cm., (B60 J742)
Bottom: Bird-shaped fitting, l: 2.86 cm., (B60 J807)

5 Three Bronze Ritual Vessels
China
Middle Shang period (16th-14th century B.C.)
Left: type *Jue*, h: 17.78 cm., (B60 B725)
Middle: type *Liding*, h: 15.24 cm., (B60 B920)
Right: type *Gu*, h: 17.78 cm., (B65 B61)

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Yungang, Longmen and Tianlongshan. Only recently was it realized that an assemblage of eight pictorial tiles, (Fig. 8), once components of the facade of the unique Xiudingsi Pagoda, near Anyang, had been commissioned by a Tang emperor during the 2nd quarter of the 7th century A.D. This was another example of Mr. Brundage's intuition in dealing with unidentified objects. He had insisted that these tiles remain in his collection during an intense evaluation for weeding out the collection. He was adamant despite profuse advice from outside specialists that he dispose of them. Those specialists, who shall remain unnamed, had declared (among other things): "they're modern copies," "they're associated with no known site or style," and "they're just Korean; not worthy of your collection."

Decorative arts in lacquer, ivory, cloisonné, enamelware, carved wood and rhinoceros horn, and furniture round out his collection, totalling about five hundred items. Particularly outstanding among them are the world's oldest-known dated Chinese lacquer *lian* (278 B.C.) and a lacquer bowl, dated 1 A.D.

Only recently ten ivories were loaned to a major special exhibition on the subject at the British Museum, only one example of the multitude of requests from other museums to borrow objects from Mr. Brundage's collection.

Comprehensive exhibitions of Chinese art from the Avery Brundage Collection have toured the United States (1968-1969)[6], Japan (1970)[7] and Hong Kong (1983)[8], and his collection has spawned numerous publications.

Korean and Japanese Art

Mr. Brundage's Korean collection consists of 350 items, being especially strong in its varied assortment of archaeological ceramics from the late Three Kingdoms and United Silla period (5th through 9th centuries A.D.). It also is noteable for its breadth and depth of Koryo period (918-1392 A.D.) celadons. Represented as well are Buddhist sculptures, bronze vessels and implements, paintings, lacquers and furniture. Deserving of particular note in this department are the gilt bronze sculpture of the Amitabha Buddha from the United Silla dynasty (8th century A.D.), the largest specimen of such quality in a western collection, and an exceptionally rare Koryo (14th century A.D.) painting of "The Buddha and Eight Great Bodhisattvas," (Fig. 9). In fact, no other example of this type of painting is known to remain in Korea today and less than a dozen survive in Japanese and western collections. According to Korean National Museum officials, Mr. Brundage's exceptional 12th century Koryo celadon

6

6 Rhinoceros-shaped Ritual Vessel, type *Xicun*
China
Late Shang period (11th century B.C.)
Bronze
h: 22.86 cm.
(B60 B1+)

7 Seated Buddha in Meditation
China
Posterior Zhao dynasty
(dated by inscription to 338 A.D.)
Gilt bronze
h: 39.37 cm.
(B60 B1034)

8 Ashura Depicted as Dancing
Central Asian; moulded relief grey tile, originally from the Xiudingsi Pagoda, Anyang, Henan
China
Tang dynasty, 2nd quarter, 7th century A.D.
h: 64.77 cm.
(B61 S21+)

ewer (Fig. 10), were it still in Korea, would unquestionably be registered a National Treasure.

Mr. Brundage's collection of Japanese art consists of more than 2,400 objects (including some 1,800 *netsuke* and inro). Because of its all-round character the museum today displays the most consistently comprehensive selection of Japanese art in all media of any American museum. Over one hundred seventy-five ceramics (vessels and figurines) can easily provide specimens to demonstrate the evolution of Japanese ceramics from the 20th century B.C. to the 20th century A.D.

Particularly strong is the assortment of tea-related wares from the Momoyama and early Edo periods (16th through 18th centuries A.D.). One hundred and eighty-eight screens and scroll paintings from Kamakura through Edo (1185-1868 A.D.), represent the major schools and styles. Over 70 sculptures of Buddhist and Shinto origin from Tempyo (8th century A.D.), through late Edo (19th century), encompass the media of dry lacquer, bronze and wood. Large architectural elements, archaeological bronzes, swords and decorative arts of ivory, metals and textiles make up the remainder.

Noteworthy, and indeed rare among collections of Japanese art, is a 1.3 meter high Haniwa warrior figure (Fig. 11) (Kofun period, 5th-6th century A.D.) from Fujioka, Gumma prefecture. It is of such importance that it would surely have become a registered Japanese National Treasure had it not been exported. Equally significant among the early objects is a large 5th century *Dotaku* (bronze bell), one of a set of fourteen excavated in Oshinobara in 1881 A.D., brought to Mr. Brundage's attention by Kyoto professor of Archaeology, Umehara Sueji. Among the sculptures are the 1.5 m. high dry lacquer figures of Bonten and Taishakuten (Fig. 12), from the Tempyo (8th century A.D.) era. These two are the only major dry lacquer figures ever to have been released from the famous Nara temple, the Kofukuji, the two figures having been sold by the temple's head priest to a private collector in the mid-19th century in order to finance temple repairs. The companion dry lacquer figures remaining in Kofukuji are all registered as National Treasures or Important Cultural Properties. Equally rare are a pair of landscape screens executed in an early Chinese landscape style (*suiboku*) by Shikibu Ryukyu (early 16th century A.D.), (Fig. 13). Only three other major screen paintings by this artist are known to exist and they are in Japan. Some of the Brundage Collection objects, such as the 14th century Kamakura painting of "Fudo Myoo" were once publicly registered Cultural Properties in Japan. They were officially "deregistered" with the understanding that collector Avery Brundage deposit and preserve these objects in perpetuity in a public

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9 "Preaching Buddha with Eight Great Bodhisattvas", by anonymous artist
Korea
Koryo dynasty (14th century A.D.)
Hanging scroll, ink colors and gold on silk
h: 151.13 cm., w: 88.74 cm.
(B72 D38)

10 Buddhist Ritual Ewer, celadon-glazed
Korea
Koryo dynasty (12th century A.D.)
Porcellaneous ware
h: 24.45 cm.
(B60 P123+)

11 Haniwa Warrior, excavated at Fujioka in Gumma Prefecture
Japan
Late Tumulus Era (6th century A.D.)
Red earthenware
h: 1.3 m.
(B60 S204)

10

11

cultural institution where they would be displayed with the same respect as if they had remained in Japan.

The Arts of India, the Himalayas and Southeast Asia

Mr. Brundage's Indian art consists of nearly 400 objects, primarily sculptures in stone, bronze, terracotta and wood spanning the major periods of Indian art from the 3rd century B.C. to the 19th century A.D.

There are representative examples of sculptural styles of every regional school with an extensive Gandharan and Chola inventory as well as the largest inventory of Pala stone sculptures in the US. Another strength is the group of medieval Hindu and Jain sculptures, including many rare iconographic types. The departmental curator, Terese Bartholomew, described them, remarking, "Mr. Brundage was unusually eclectic in his taste and methods of collecting, but had a marked predilection for Hindu statuary. As a result, the museum now has 21 versions of the god Vishnu and his different avatars, 20 of Shiva and his various forms, eight of the elephant-headed god Ganesha, five of his brother Karttikeya, five of Durga the buffalo demon slayer, and four of the Sun God Surya, just to mention a few."[9]

Also noteworthy are two dozen Moghul jades, one of which is inscribed as the miniature jewel box of Emperor Jahangir (dated 1621 A.D.) and another inscribed as the private drinking cup of Emperor Shah Jahan.

Outstanding are the Gandharan near life-size Bodhisattva, a sensuously modelled Brahmani in fine Chola style from Kanchipuram (Fig. 14), the most appealing Hoysala Ganesha in any American collection (Fig. 15) and a Vijayanagar Somaskanda executed with superb precision and detail. Another focal object, the Crowned Buddha (Fig. 16), from Nalanda, Bihar, is considered by some the most highly sophisticated sculpture from the Pala period and just recently travelled nationwide with the exhibition, "The Light of Asia."

Mr. Brundage's assemblage of objects from the Himalayas consists of over 300 items with special emphasis on religious art, primarily gilt bronze sculptures, temple banners (thankas), plaques and ritual objects in copper and silver. The thanka collection is one of the largest in a public American institution, numbering 120 examples from the 16th through the 19th centuries. Mr. B possessed the largest representative group of thankas of the Ngör sect with examples from their most sacred monastery, Evam Chos-ldan in the Tsang region, Southern Tibet, and a rare, complete set of Tibetan Lohan paintings. Among the many bronzes, one of the finest is a graceful figure of Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion (Fig. 17), from Western Tibet which was perhaps cast at one of the monasteries at Toling or Tabo.

The assemblage of Southeast Asian art comprises over 200 examples, from Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Indonesia, primarily of sculptures in stone, wood, dry lacquer, terracotta, bronze and silver. Also there are 50 ceramics from Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

When donor Avery Brundage presented his collection to San Francisco in 1960 the entire Southeast Asian section consisted of just over one hundred examples. With the creation of a permanent home for his treasures, he and his consultant, Yvon d'Argencé began a systematic expansion of the department. In fact, wrote the director later, "it has become evident that no American collection or museum has responded more eloquently to the forceful and highly notional, aesthetic message of the regions located between the Irrawady and the Mekong and between Hanoi and Borobudur."[10] So successful was their comprehensive plan that the museum today possesses examples representing all major phases of the pre-Khmer, Khmer, Thai, Cham and Shailendra styles. These span the broad cultural and religious heritages of India, and are imbued with Hindu, Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhist influences; yet they demonstrate how local craftsmen transmuted their influences into regional artistic traditions and bear highly individualized iconography inspired by unique, localized cults.

The focal point of the assemblage are the Khmer sculptures, a particular predilection of Mr. Brundage. One of his ambitions was to gather together the finest such collection, and thus no fewer than half of the Southeast Asian inventory are Khmer sculptures, many of monumental proportions. Outstanding among them are an impressive, spectacular Vishnu in Pre-Rup style (10th century A.D.), and a rare Royal Couple as Shiva and his consort (Fig. 18), in the Baphuon style (11th century A.D.). Equally noteworthy and of great public appeal are the ten carved stone lintels, displayed at their intended architectural levels, one of which dynamically portrays "Kumbhakarna Battling Monkeys", an episode from the *Ramayana* (Fig. 19).

The quintessential bronze sculpture is an Avalokiteshvara, found amidst a horde of others at Prakhonchai. It is a very rare remembrance of the little-known pre-Khmer Canasa Kingdom on the Korat Plateau of today's northeastern Thailand. A small (eighteen items), but important group of sculptures from Central Java, includes examples from such sacred sites as Chandi Borobudur (Fig. 20).

And Near Eastern Art, too

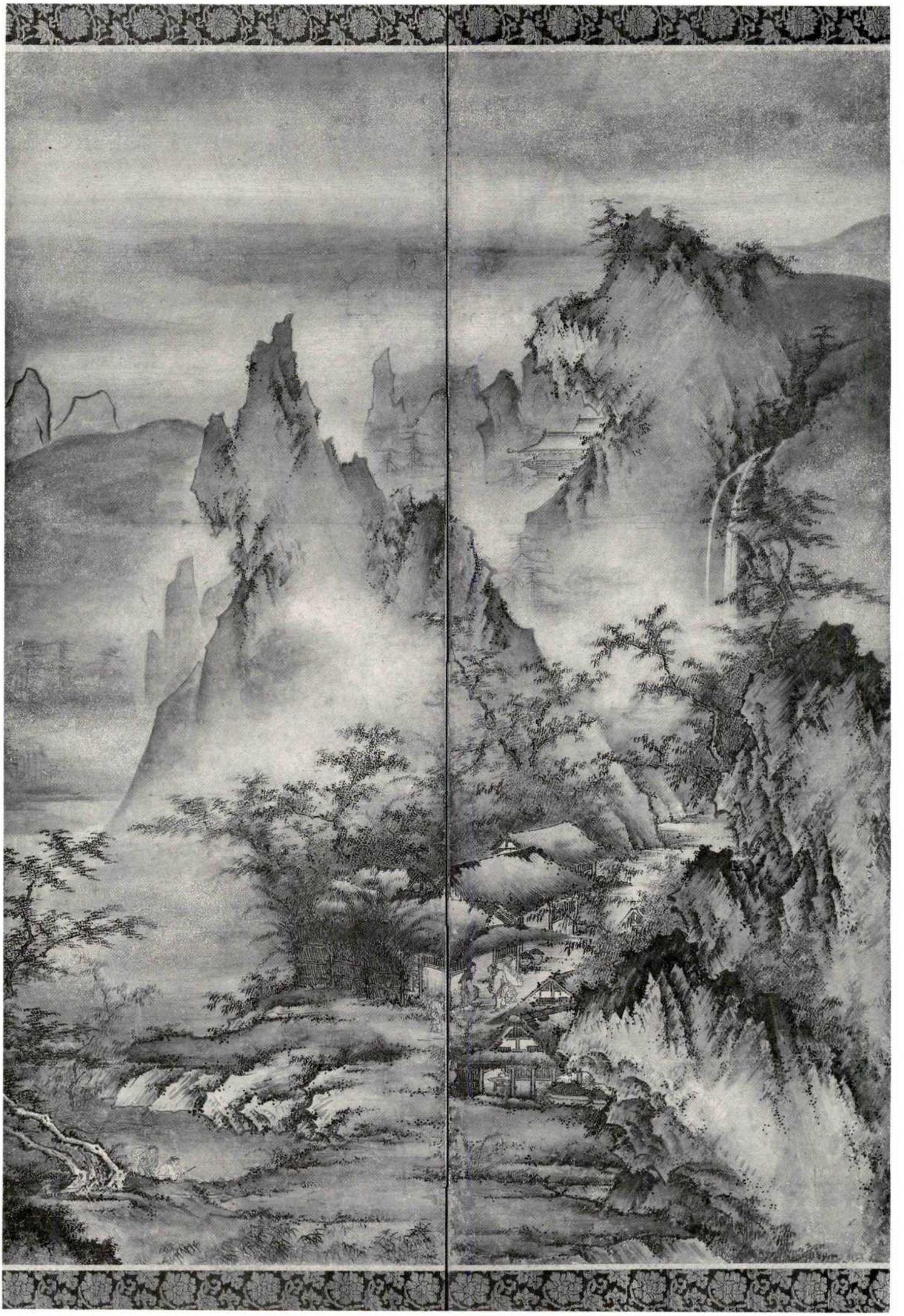
The least-known objects in the Avery Brundage Collection are those from the Near East, for the 450 Iranian and other Near Eastern objects have long been overshadowed by the

12 The Divine Attendant Taishakuten (derived from Indra), originally reposed in the Kofukuji, Nara
Japan
Tempyo period (8th century A.D.)
h: 150.00 cm.
(B65 S12)

13 a, b "Landscape in the Chinese Manner," by Shikibu Terutada (style name of Ryukyu):- details from a pair of six-fold screens
Japan
Late Muromachi period (16th century A.D.)
Ink, light colors and gold on paper
h: 171.45 cm., l: 322.58 cm.
(B60 D48+, D49+)

14 Brahmani
South India, probably from Kanchipuram
Chola period (9th century A.D.)
Carved granite
h: 73.66 cm.
(B60 S47+)

15 Seated Ganesha
South India, probably from Mysore region
Hoysala period (12th-13th century A.D.)
Carved chloritic schist
h: 90.17 cm.
(B68 S4)



13a

13b

14

15

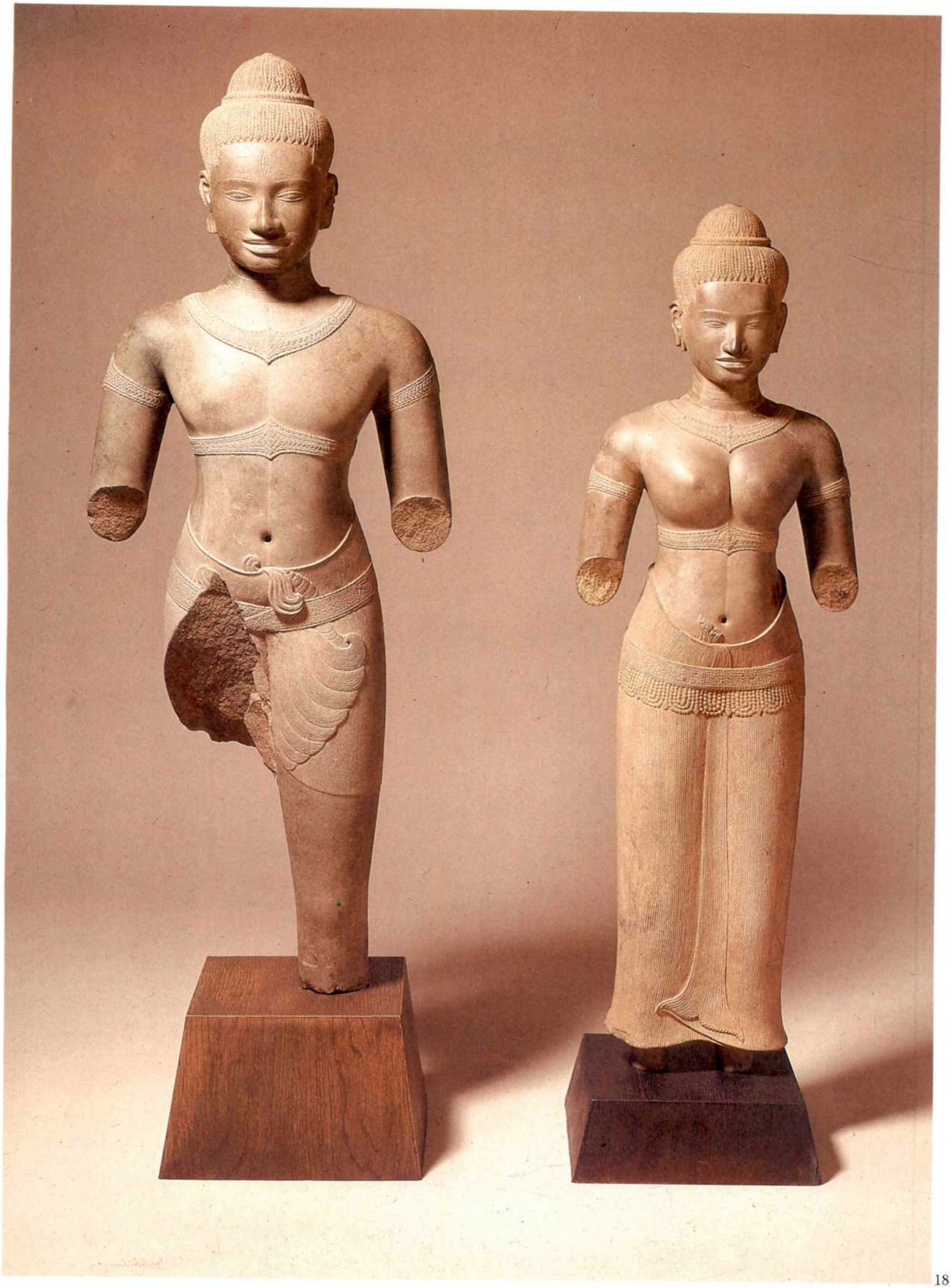
16 Crowned Buddha
Northeastern India
Pala period (11th century A.D.)
Chlorite
h: 104.14 cm.
(B65 S11)

17 Avalokiteshvara
Western Tibet or Ladakh
ca. 1300 A.D.
Brass with pigments
h: 30.48 cm.
(B60 S230)

18 Royal Couple as Shiva and His Consort
Khmer Empire
Baphuon Style, late 11th century A.D.
Carved sandstone
Male: h: 111.76 cm., (B66 S2)
Female: h: 104.14 cm., (B66 S3)

16

1



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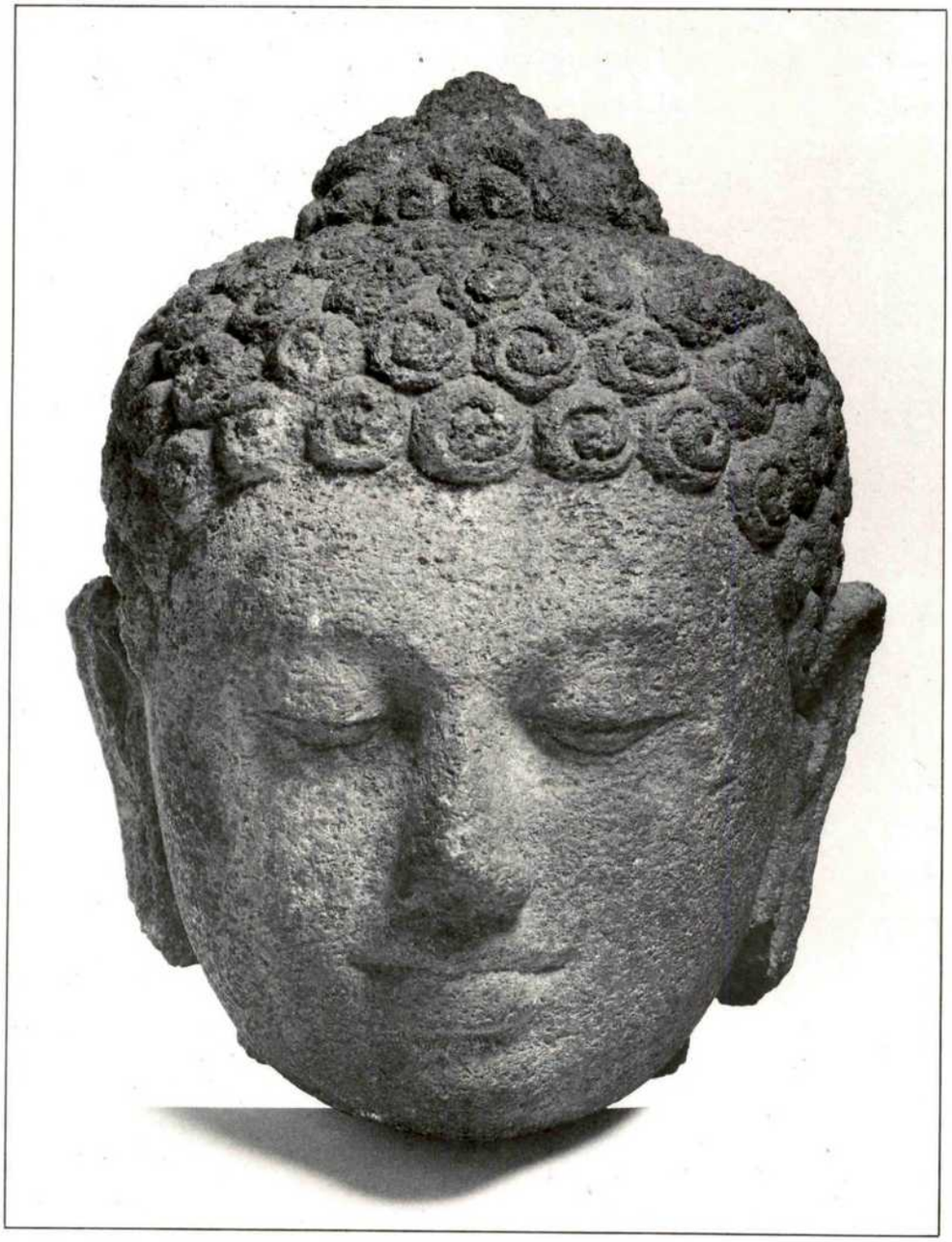


20

19 "Kumbhakarna Battling Monkeys"
Khmer
Angkor Wat or early Bayon period,
ca. 12th century A.D.
Carved sandstone lintel
h: 88.90 cm., l: 187.96 cm.
(B66 S7)

20 Head of Buddha
Central Java, probably from Chandi Borobudur
Shailendra dynasty, ca. 800 A.D.
Carved lava
h: 31.75 cm.
(B60 S379)

21 Dish with Horse and Cheetah
Northeastern Iran, Nishapur area
9th-10th century A.D.
Glazed earthenware with polychrome decoration
diam: 35.56 cm.
(B68 P7)

22 Bust of Avery Brundage,
by Jean Sprenger

21

22

richer collections of Chinese, Japanese and Greater Indian art. Objects in this department offer a panorama of 6,000 years of artistic expression from the prehistoric through the Islamic medieval periods. The painted earthenwares, glazed ceramics and metal objects demonstrate succinctly the Middle Eastern artisans' ability to create works of beauty, complexity and perfection from very simple materials, a quality obviously in tune with Mr. Brundage's philosophy. Of particular significance are the Amlash ceramics (ca. 1000-700 B.C.), including a rare female-shaped vessel and two stag-shaped vessels, and a group of bronzes (ca. 1000-650 B.C.), from the mountainous province of Luristan.

The bulk of the Near Eastern section consists of Islamic ceramics, of which those from Nishapur and Transoxiana (9th-19th century A. D.) are exceptional. Noteworthy is a Nishapur three-color plate with a horse and cheetah (Fig. 21). Recently, in order to bring some public attention to this too-long neglected group of fine objects in his collection, the museum, as part of its ongoing thematic exhibitions drawn from the museum's reserves, presented "Selected Masterpieces of Near Eastern Art in the Avery Brundage Collection," a group of 52 objects which reflected the extraordinary discernment and taste of Avery Brundage as a collector.

The Avery Brundage Collection: A Bridge of Understanding

At a 1966 press conference, Avery Brundage philosophized about his collection in San Francisco serving as a bridge of understanding between peoples: "If we want to understand Orientals, we must study their history, their philosophy and their culture. This project (a museum devoted to Asian art) presents a wonderful opportunity for San Francisco and its people to become leaders in a search for the new understanding so desperately needed, for a bridge of international knowledge and respect. Such a bridge will be of incalculable value in promoting trade and commerce which will benefit every citizen in this community... As the Olympic Movement develops international friendship and amity, so can international understanding and respect come from the study of the fine arts. There is no reason that San Francisco, already a favorite city of foreign visitors, cannot, through this museum project, construct this bridge... this will be San Francisco's contribution to a happier and more peaceful world."

A bust of Avery Brundage (Fig. 22), by the German sculptor, Jean Sprenger stands in the courtyard of the museum housing his remarkable collection.

Dedicated by the Asian Art Commission of San Francisco, a board responsible for the welfare of his collection in perpetuity, this symbol honors Mr. Brundage with the inscription: "The lives of untold millions of men, women and children of this and future generations will be enriched by his generosity."

FOOTNOTES

1 *One Hundred Objects of Asian Art from the Avery Brundage Collection,* M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, 1960, "Foreword" by Laurence Sickman, unpaginated.
2 Thomas Hoving, "101 Top Collectors," *Connoisseur,* September 1983, p. 112.
3 Charles Fabens Kelley, "Exhibition of the Brundage Collection of Chinese Bronzes at the Art Institute of Chicago," *Oriental Art,* Vol. 2, No. 1 (summer 1949), pps. 11-15.
4 *Oriental Sculptures from the Avery Brundage Collection,* Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1956, unpaginated.
5 *A Decade of Collecting,* an exhibition celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco , the Avery Brundage Collection, San Francisco 1976, pps. 41-50, 56-66.
6 *Chinese Treasures from the Avery Brundage Collection,* travelling exhibition organized by Asia House Gallery, New York 1968.
7 Osaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan, *Brundage Collection: the Fascinations of Asian Arts,* Osaka 1970 (bilingual text).
8 *Gems of Chinese Art from the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, the Avery Brundage Collection,* Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong 1983 (bilingual text).
9 Terese Tse Bartholomew, "Images of Ganesa," *Apollo,* Vol. CXII, No. 222 (August 1980), p. 69.
10 R. Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé, "The Arts of South-East Asia," *Oriental Art,* Vol. XXII, No. 4 (Winter 1976), p. 396.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED READING

R. Y. d'Argencé, *Bronze Vessels of Ancient China in the Avery Brundage Collection,* San Francisco 1977.
R. Y. d'Argencé, *Chinese Jades in the Avery Brundage Collection,* San Francisco 1977.
R. Y. d'Argencé, et al, *Chinese, Korean and Japanese Sculpture in the Avery Brundage Collection,* San Francisco 1974.
Heinz Schöbel, *The Four Dimensions of Avery Brundage,* Edition Leipzig, 1968.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, 3RD

(1906-1978)

Robert L. Brown

The Man and His Family Tradition

Perhaps no name is so universally associated with wealth and philanthropy as that of Rockefeller. The patriarch of the family, John D. Rockefeller, Sr., created the fortune in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, primarily through the establishment of the Standard Oil Company. It was also under John Sr. that the family became committed to philanthropy; by the time of his death in 1937, at the age of 98, John Sr. had given over 500 million dollars to charity.

John Sr. had four daughters and one son. The son, John Jr., further increased the family's wealth, continued to support philanthropic projects, and, along with his wife Abby, began seriously to collect art, including material from Asia. His personal passion was for Chinese ceramics, mainly the highly decorated, usually large, seventeenth and eighteenth century Kangxi porcelains. While his enthusiasm for these ceramics was shared by other contemporary industrialists such as J. P. Morgan and reflects the fashion of the time, John Jr.'s interest was more than superficial; he carefully catalogued the porcelains and surrounded himself with them in his home. John Jr. and his wife collected other Asian art as well, and the exposure to this art must have influenced their oldest son, John 3rd.

John 3rd was by nature reserved and modest, the antithesis of his boisterous younger brother Nelson, one-time Governor of New York and Vice President of the United States. Of all five sons of John Jr.,[1] John 3rd was the least comfortable in his public role, but the one who most strongly carried on his father's interest in philanthropy and in Asia. John 3rd's first trip to Asia was to Japan in 1929, just after graduation from college. He did not begin collecting Asian art, however, until 1951 while accompanying John Foster Dulles on his peace treaty mission to Japan. In the interim twenty odd years, between his first trip to Japan and the Dulles mission, John 3rd came to be regarded as something of an expert on East Asia, working as an advisor on Asian affairs to the U.S. government in various capacities during World War II.

Initially John 3rd and his wife Blanchette (Fig. 1) collected Asian art for their own enjoyment and as reminders of their trips to various Asian countries. It is apparent, however, that these intentions were soon modified. No Rockefeller undertook an extensive project, such as collecting art, without considering its public dimensions. John 3rd was becoming more and more committed to furthering U.S. understanding of Asia through cultural exchanges. Shortly after his return from the 1951 Dulles mission to Japan, he became president of the Japan Society, an organization dedicated to the promotion of Japanese culture; in 1956 he founded The Asia Society which, by 1980, had sponsored 70 important loan exhibitions of Asian art; and in 1963 he created and endowed the JDR 3rd Fund as an organization to support the interchange of Asian and American art historians and artists.[2] He clearly saw at some point the functioning of his personal collection of Asian art within this public context.

The seriousness with which he began to collect can be seen in his request in 1963 that Sherman E. Lee, then Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, be his artistic advisor. Dr. Lee filled this role for the next fifteen years, until John 3rd's death in 1978. The impact Lee had on the collection was, I think, substantial. He met on a monthly basis with John 3rd and Blanchette during which he would present his suggested acquisitions, each graded with a letter like a school essay: A+, A, A−, and so forth. The criteria Lee used to determine the grades were, among others, quality, condition, and rarity. From his long tenure at the Cleveland Museum and his own writings,[3] we know these criteria are Lee's own. Particularly the first, that of quality, is always the characteristic Lee most stressed in collecting and is clearly the watchword of John 3rd's own collection. Nevertheless, however influential Sherman Lee was on the collection, he always emphasized that the ultimate decision as to whether to acquire an object or not was made by the Rockefellers themselves.

In 1974 John 3rd made public his intention to give his collection to one of the institutions he had founded, The Asia Society.[4] It consisted at that point of some 250 objects and was intended to serve as the Society's permanent collection. In giving the material to The Asia Society, rather than to an already established museum, John 3rd intended to maintain the integrity of the collection by producing a "small specialized museum of high quality."[5] The collection opened to the public in galleries especially designed for the material at the Society's new headquarters in New York in 1981, three years after John 3rd's death.

Art from the Far East

John D. Rockefeller, 3rd was usually willing to remain behind the scenes. At both The Asia Society and the JDR 3rd Fund, although he founded and largely financed both, he allowed the directors and others to operate without much direct interference. The adjectives I have heard most often used to describe John 3rd by those who knew him in these contexts are "modest", "consistent", and "quiet".

In connection with his art collecting, these same personality traits have resulted in our having very little written by him (at least that is accessible to me) giving his personal philosophy of collecting. We have little published information on the subject from those who knew him as a collector as well, I assume because he was reticent in expressing his views to them. Gordon Washburn, a past director of Asia House Gallery, has written that John 3rd

1 Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, 3rd viewing a bronze Dvaravati-style Buddha image in their collection. The 14th-century blue-and-white dish illustrated in Fig. 2 is in the background.

asked himself before buying an object: "Does it stir and lift me?"[6] In order to determine what this might have meant, however, we must look to the art objects themselves. Perhaps the objects in a collection always speak most eloquently and accurately of a collector's taste and philosophy, and it is to them that we will now turn.

The largest portion of the collection is composed of East Asian material, with about three-fifths being Chinese and Japanese. John 3rd, like his father, had a preference for ceramics, and the collection is particularly strong in Chinese Imperial porcelains of the Song (960-1279), Yuan (1280-1368), and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties. That he could acquire so many fine Imperial porcelains is the result of their timely but unexpected availability on the market due to the break up of several major British collections.[7] While John 3rd's own taste was initially for the Imperial blue-and-white porcelains of the Ming dynasty, it later gravitated toward the more reserved monochrome glazed stoneware of the Song dynasty. As a consequence, this is another area in which the collection is particularly rich.

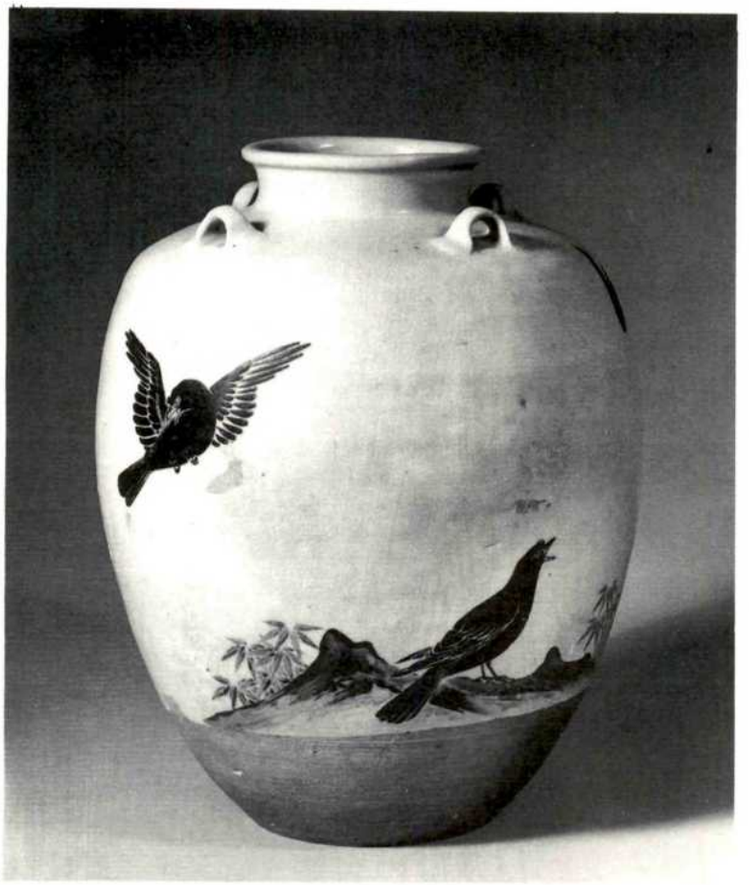
As an example of a Chinese ceramic, I have chosen a Yuan dynasty blue-and-white dish (Fig. 2) that will be of particular interest to many readers of *Marg* as it once belonged to Shah Jahan. The Mughal Emperor's name, along with a date equivalent to 1646, is engraved on the foot ring. The dish is an example of ware made specifically for export to Muslim countries where it found a ready market in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The piece's mid-fourteenth century date makes it the earliest blue-and-white porcelain in the collection. Assuming, as seems likely, that the piece was exported around the date of its manufacture, we can speculate that the dish existed in India (or some Muslim country such as Persia) for three centuries before coming into the possession of Shah Jahan. It is interesting to note that these fourteenth and fifteenth century Chinese blue-and-white porcelains were by the sixteenth century prodigiously copied in Persia and Ottoman Turkey by local potters, while the Mughals in India were satisfied always to import their ceramics and never developed their own workshops.

The Rockefeller dish has a diaper pattern on the rim, an undulating vine with flower

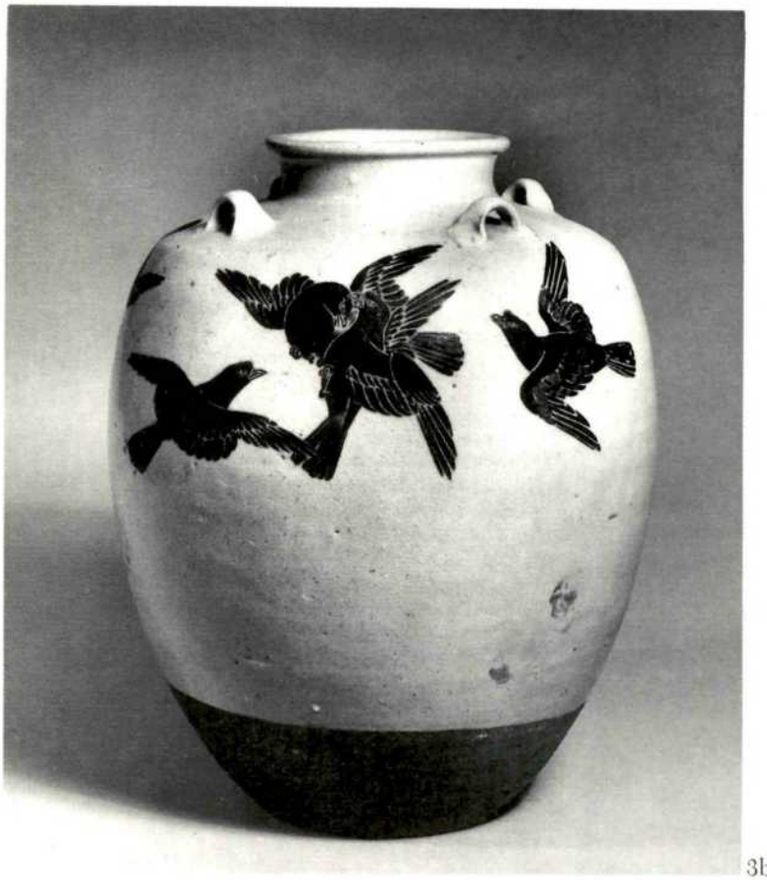
2 Large Dish with Qilin Decoration
China
Yuan dynasty, second half of the 14th century
Jing de zhen blue-and-white ware: porcelain with underglaze decoration in cobalt blue
h. 7.62 cm., diam. 46.67 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.151)
An inscription reading "Shah Jahan Ibn' Jahangir Shah, 1063" is incised on the foot ring, the date corresponding to 1646. Similar Yuan dynasty blue-and-white porcelains were exported to India, the Near East, and Southeast Asia in the fourteenth century.

3a, b Chatsubo (Tea Leaf Storage Jar) with Decoration of Rock, Bamboo, and Crows, by Nonomura Ninsei (active mid-17th century) :- 2 views
Japan
Edo period, mid-17th century
Kyoto ware: light gray stoneware with decoration in overglaze polychrome enamels and with a seal reading "Ninsei" impressed on the unglazed base
h. 30.48 cm., diam. 24.13 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.251)
The seven crows, a bird the Japanese consider auspicious, are arranged around the jar so that every view presents an interesting composition. The direction in which the birds look draws the viewer's attention to the two fighting crows.

2



3a



3b

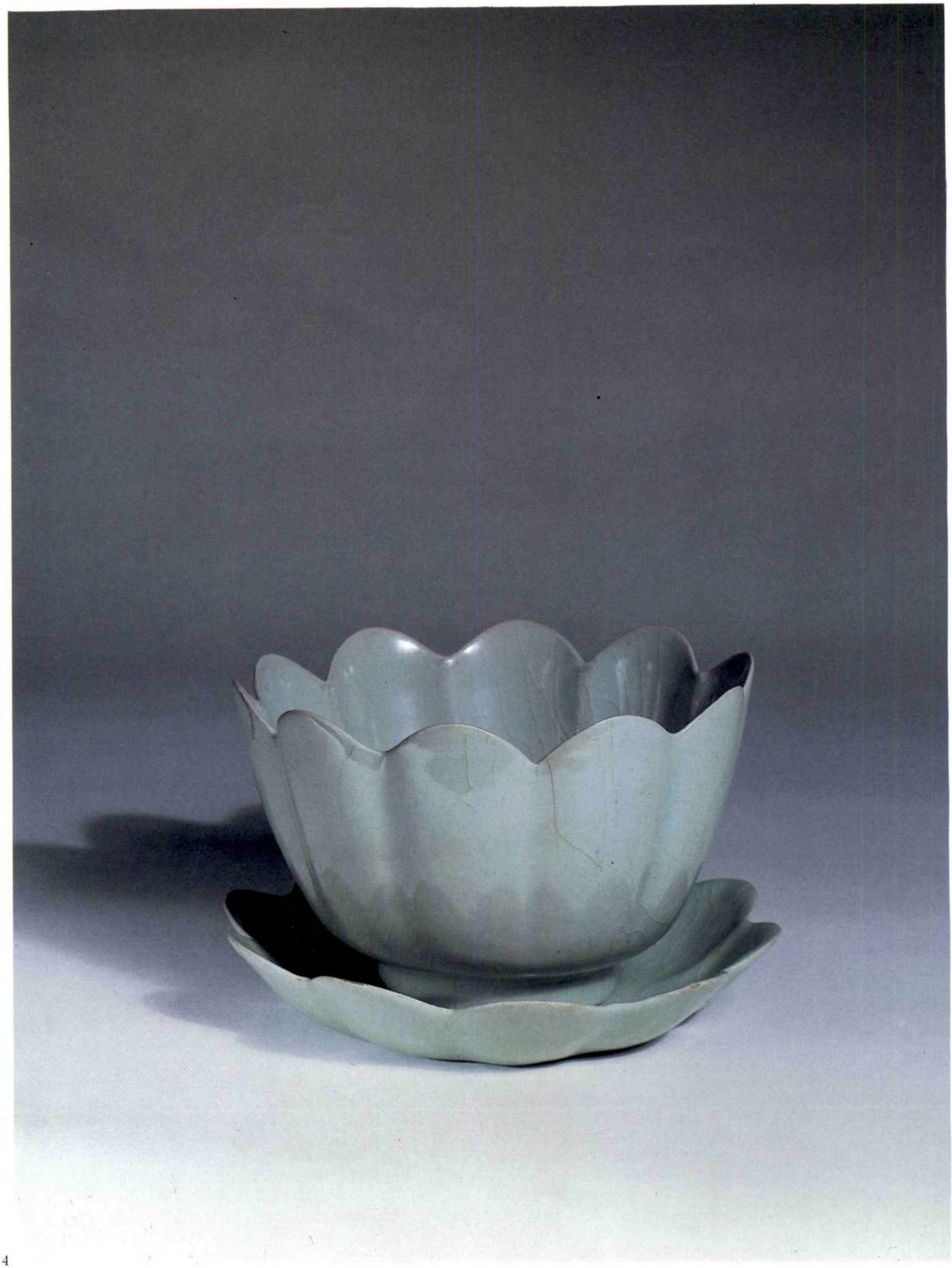
design on the cavetto, and a leaping fantastic animal (qilin) tightly surrounded by floral motifs and tiny landscape elements in the well. These designs and their arrangement vary only in their details on these export wares and are considered to have been made by the Chinese specifically to the Muslim taste.

John 3rd did not collect Japanese ceramics as extensively as Chinese, but those he did acquire are of the highest quality and include several masterpieces. One outstanding example is the Tea Jar (Figs. 3 a and b) by the famed Kyoto potter Nonomura Ninsei (1596-1660). Ninsei made only about ten of these large jars, which were used as part of the paraphernalia for the highly formalized tea ceremony. Stored in the jars during the summer was the newly cut tea to be used in November at a ceremony when "the unopened jar, sealed with heavy paper and decorated with a brocade cap and silk cords secure through the four handles on the squared shoulder, was set out in the alcove of the tea room for presentation to guests."[8] These guests, like Ninsei's patrons, were among the most sophisticated art connoisseurs of the time. They would have admired Ninsei's design of seven crows masterfully arranged to fill the difficult swelling surface of the round jar. Also to their taste would be the combination of the lavishness of the rich enamels and flecks of silver with the simplicity of the red clay left unglazed at the bottom.

The final example of ceramic ware from the collection is a twelfth-century Korean celadon bowl and saucer (Fig. 4). Their ten-lobed shape, suggestive of a flower, is matched in its austere purity by the subdued pale blue-green glaze. The extremely thin and delicate body and the transparency of the glaze make this bowl and saucer an example of the high technical level achieved by the Korean workshops in the twelfth century. In their gracefulness, refinement, and quality, this bowl and saucer reflect aspects of John 3rd's personal artistic preferences.

Besides ceramics, John 3rd's collection of East Asian art includes many outstanding sculptures, paintings, and bronzes. The large Western Han dynasty (206 B.C. - A.D. 9) basin (Fig. 5) is, for example, an excellent specimen of early Chinese metalwork. It is made of gilded bronze with silver inlays. The design includes an eight-lobed pattern at the center that may have cosmological significance as pointing to the four cardinal and four intermediary directions. The four animals spaced around the central design, a lion, tiger, and two dragons (one with one horn and one with two), appear also to refer to the four cardinal directions. The use of four animals to indicate spacial directions may remind us of a similar use of animals in Indian art at about the same time, as on the famous Ashokan lion capital.

Buddhism reached China from India around the first century B.C., from where it traveled to Japan via Korea in the sixth century. John 3rd collected several Chinese and Japanese Buddhist sculptures, one of which, the Jizo Bosatsu (Fig. 6), is a masterwork. Jizo is the Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha (Matrix of the Earth) who, while mentioned in Indian texts, was very rarely depicted in Indian art. In Japan, however, Jizo became very popular, particularly



4

4 Bowl and Saucer
Korea
Koryo dynasty, early 12th century
Koryo celadon ware: fine-grained, light gray stoneware with celadon glaze
Bowl: h. 9.21 cm., diam. 14.61 cm.
Saucer: h. 2.86 cm., diam. 15.87 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.193. 1 & 4)
The simplicity and perfection of these objects reflect closely the personal aesthetic of Mr. Rockefeller.

5 Large Basic Type Pan with Animal Decoration
China
Western Han period (206 B.C.—A.D. 9)
Bronze core enveloped with sheet silver, the silver engraved and gilded
diam. 50.8 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.108)
The inner circle is decorated with directional symbols, while the adjacent band includes some twenty-five animals and figures, all arranged against a background of stylized mountain and cloud patterns.

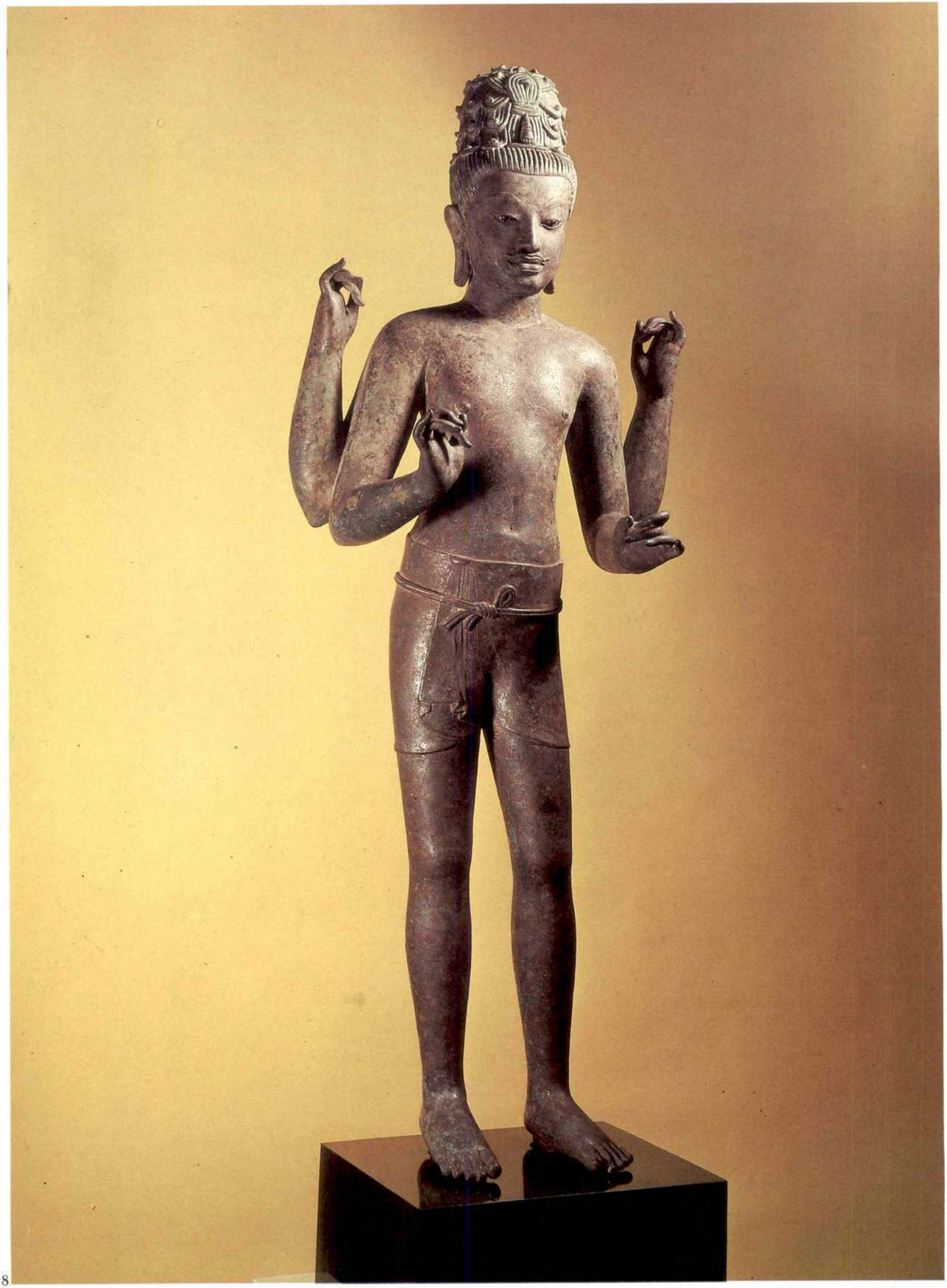
5

6 Jizo Bosatsu by Zen'en
Japan
Kamakura period, between 1223 and 1226
Cypress wood (*yosegi* or joined-block technique) with polychromy and *kirikane* (cut gold leaf)
h. 57.78 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.202)
Written in ink on the hollow interior are the names of the donors of the sculpture and that of the sculptor, Zen'en. From this information the date of the work can be placed sometime between 1223 and 1226.

7 Coquettish Woman, From the series *Fujin Sogaku Juttai* (*Ten Examples of the Physiognomies of Women*), by Kitagawa Utamaro— (1753-1806)
Japan
Edo period, 1791
Woodblock print; ink, color, and mica on paper
h. 37.78 cm., w. 25.08 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.219)
The cartouche includes not only the print's title and artist's name but also the name of the publisher, Tsutaya Juzaburo, and the seal of the well-known Western collector, Henri Vever, who once owned the work.

6

婦人相學十躰
浮気之相
相見
歌麿画



8

8 The Bodhisattva Maitreya
Prakon Chai, Thailand
ca. 8th century
Bronze with inlays of silver and black stone
h. 96.52 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.63)
The majority of the bronzes found at Prakon Chai are representations of the bodhisattvas Maitreya or Avalokiteshvara. In style, they relate most closely to supposedly contemporary Cambodian art styles, with the Rockefeller Maitreya reflecting the 8th-century style of Kompong Preah.

9 Female Figure
Cambodia
Angkor period, 11th century
Sandstone
h. 96.52 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.65)
The unelaborated simplicity of this torso greatly appealed to John D. Rockefeller, 3rd.

10 Kneeling Woman
Cambodia
Angkor period, 11th-12th century
Bronze
h. 47.63 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.69)
The way in which the figure kneels is still the position taken today by both male and female adorants when worshipping before Buddha images in Buddhist temples in Southeast Asia.

10

during the Kamakura and Muromachi periods (1185-1573), and was frequently represented in painting and sculpture.

Jizo is shown as a youthful monk in the Rockefeller sculpture. He holds a *chintamani* jewel in his left hand and a bronze staff in his right. The eyes are realistically inset with rock crystal pupils over black paper. The image itself is hollow, being made of joined blocks of wood; the surface is gilded lacquer with a fine net of cut gold designs on the robe.

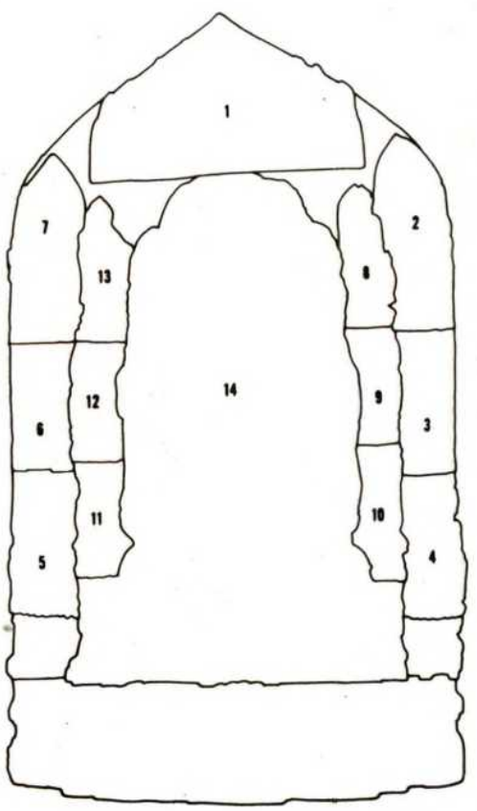
The Bodhisattva Jizo was believed to preside during the age of lawlessness on earth, the period between the death of Shakyamuni and the coming of Maitreya and in which we are living still today. Jizo looks after mankind during this exceptionally chaotic period, administering particularly to the many people who are confined to Hell. The compassion with which Jizo regarded humanity, reflected in the gentle and peaceful countenance of the image, must have appealed directly to John 3rd. He was drawn to sculpture representing deities in their calm and kind manifestations rather than their fierce forms.

11 Seated Male Figure
Si Thep, Thailand
ca. 7th century
Sandstone
h. 68.26 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.73)
The unusual anatomical realism of this figure places it among a small group of both Hindu and Buddhist images from Si Thep in present-day Thailand.

11

12a, b Plaque with Scenes from the Life of the Buddha
Burma
12th century
Sandstone with traces of gilding
h. 19.68 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.90)
The scenes from Shakyamuni's life are given in the diagram 12a.

12a:— (1) The Death (Mahaparinirvana)
(2) The Descent from Trayastrinsha Heaven
(3) The Shravasti Miracles
(4) The Monkey's Gift of Honey
(5) The Birth
(6) The First Sermon
(7) The Taming of the Mad Elephant Nalagiri
(8), (13) Weeks one and three at Bodhgaya after the Enlightenment: Buddha standing or walking
(9), (12) Weeks one, four and five at Bodhgaya after the Enlightenment: Buddha seated in meditation
(10) Week six at Bodhgaya after the Enlightenment: Buddha protected by the snake king
(11) Week seven at Bodhgaya after the Enlightenment: Buddha receives a gift from the merchants Tapussa and Bhallika
(14) The Defeat of Mara (The Enlightenment)



12a

12b

13 The Buddha Shakyamuni
India
6th century
Bronze
h. 43.18 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.8)
The large size of this image makes it one of the most impressive of these Gupta-style bronze Buddha figures known. The recent appearance of most of these previously unknown bronzes is due to their removal from Tibetan monasteries, where they were preserved for centuries, following the disruption of the Chinese takeover of Tibet which led to its eventual incorporation into the People's Republic in 1965.

The final East Asian object illustrated here is an eighteenth-century woodblock print (Fig. 7) by the famous Japanese artist Kitagawa Utamaro (1753-1806). The painting and graphic tradition in East Asia was, of course, among the greatest in the world. John 3rd's predilection for three-dimensional objects, however, kept the collection restricted in examples of paintings and prints. The several outstanding works in these media that the collection does possess may be due largely to Dr. Lee's advice.[9]

Utamaro's print shows a woman wringing out a towel and is one from a set entitled *Ten Examples of the Physiognomies of Women.* This particular figure is identified in the cartouche as of a "wanton" or "inconstant" type, perhaps hinted at by the disheveled robe revealing the rounded shapes of breast and shoulder. The suggestion is that she is washing after being with her lover.[10] Utamaro signed the print, with tongue in cheek, as "Drawn by Utamaro the Physiognomist."

Art from Southeast Asia

Before turning to works of Southeast Asian art, we can pause to summarize the characteristics of the collection and of John 3rd's taste as thus far revealed by the discussion of East Asian art. He had a preference for three-dimensional objects, and thus sculpture and ceramics are well represented. The sculpture we looked at, the Jizo Bosatsu, is typical of the beatific and contemplative images John 3rd enjoyed. His liking for ceramics may be attributed in part to his father's collecting Chinese porcelains, but the son firmly rejected his father's flamboyant Kangxi ware for the subdued monochrome Song ceramics. Paintings are not well represented in the collection, and those that are may be due largely to Dr. Lee's advice to round out the collection in preparation for its eventual public display. Each of the objects thus far discussed share characteristics of quality, simplicity, and craftsmanship, creating a quiet refinement in keeping with John 3rd's own personality.

Although East Asia was the initial focus of interest for John 3rd in Asia, he and his wife made numerous trips to South and Southeast Asia, where they found the region's rich sculptural tradition particularly appealing. Southeast Asian sculpture is especially well represented by material from Thailand and Cambodia, four examples of which are illustrated here. The first, the Bodhisattva Maitreya (Fig. 8), is perhaps the finest Southeast Asian object in the collection. It comes from a hoard of bronzes discovered in 1964 in Prakon Chai district near the Cambodian border in present-day Northeast Thailand. The cache, found by local villagers, is reported to have consisted of several hundred bronzes, all of which were dispersed outside of Thailand or placed in Thai private collections. While most of these bronzes are small, the Rockefeller Maitreya is one of about ten large images. In quality, completeness, and beauty, however, it is perhaps the finest bronze known from the hoard.

The Bodhisattva wears a simple short skirt (*sampot*) tied at the waist with a cord. He is otherwise completely naked and unadorned (although there is some evidence that these bronzes were decorated with real jewelry). His hair rises in an elaborate *jatamukuta* in which a tiny stupa, emblem of the future Buddha Maitreya, is embedded in the front. Separate attributes were once held in his hands. The penetrating yet gentle expression is created in part by the inlaid eyes of black stone and sheet silver. In its undecorated simplicity, soft modeling, and quiet gaze, the image must have appealed strongly to John 3rd.

A Cambodian sculpture, the eleventh-century female torso illustrated in Fig. 9, was "probably his favorite work in the collection."[11] The figure is reported to have been found in present-day Northeastern Thailand. Naked from the waist up, with the lower body wrapped in a sarong, its only decoration are the pleats on the central fall of cloth between her legs and the plain belt around her hips. The human form has become stylized to pure, simple volumes. With the absence of the head, arms, and feet, the body takes on an almost abstract shape.

A second Cambodian sculpture illustrated here is the bronze kneeling woman (Fig. 10). She rests back on her heels while raising her arms above her head. The precise identification of this figure, as with many female images in Cambodian art, is uncertain. It is apparent that she held something above her head, and a somewhat similar bronze kneeling female has been identified as holding a mirror or screen.[12] It is much more likely, however, that these kneeling female figures are heavenly adorants (*apsarasas*), intended to be placed before sculptures of deities. The *apsarasas* would have held offerings, such as flowers, on their heads, probably placed in bowls of gold or silver.

The seated stone male figure (Fig. 11) from Si Thep in Northeastern Thailand may also have represented a worshipper. Dr. Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., has recently suggested, however, that he might be identified as Aiyanar-Shasta.[13] Shasta is the South Indian god, son of Shiva and Vishnu (in his female form as Mohini) who became extremely popular from the Chola period on. Pallava-period sculpture of Shasta exist however, and one example of around A.D. 700 is found in Sri Lanka. That Shasta's cult could appear in Southeast Asia at about the same time is not surprising, and the hair style, seated posture (*maharajalilasana*), and ascetic's band (*yogapatta*) of the Rockefeller sculpture all suggest that an identification of Aiyanar-Shasta is possible. It would, however, be the only example thus far known from Southeast Asia.

Whatever its identification, it is a remarkable work of art. The sculpture has very realistically depicted such anatomical features as the larynx, collarbones, and rib cage. This almost Western interest in anatomical realism, so unusual in Indian and Southeast Asian art, is seen on only a small group of sculptures from Si Thep. Although the site has been the focus of considerable scholarly interest, the various threads of its artistic influences have yet to be unraveled.

The small stone plaque depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha (Fig. 12b), the final Southeast Asian object discussed here, brings with it several puzzles of its own. The major question is whether it, and other similar examples, were made in Burma or India. The weight of evidence, to my mind, suggests Burma, but their small size, with none over about twenty centimeters high, make them highly portable and thus their place of manufacture difficult to determine. What can be said, however, is that the plaques are in the East Indian Pala style and are among a group of eleventh- and twelfth-century Buddhist sculptures from India, Burma, and Tibet that share this same style. The interconnections of these three areas are underscored by the Rockefeller plaque having engraved on its back the syllable "om" in Tibetan, suggesting that whether made in India or Burma, it was at some point taken to Tibet. The various scenes from Buddha's life depicted on the plaque are identified in the accompanying diagram (Fig. 12a).

Art from the Indian Subcontinent

John 3rd found Indian sculpture as appealing as Southeast Asian. He liked the medium of bronze, and objects in this medium are the great strength of the South Asian material, with the collection particularly rich in Nepali and Chola-period Indian bronzes. It is apparent from the collection as a whole that John 3rd preferred the standard Indian iconographic and stylistic types, as he acquired few idiosyncratic pieces. Rather, each sculpture tends to be an example of a well-known type, made unusual by one factor: its outstanding quality.

The first Indian sculpture illustrated is a bronze standing Buddha (Fig. 13). It is one of a small group of bronze Buddha images, most of which have only recently become known, that are usually referred to as "Gupta bronzes." Most date from the sixth and seventh centuries, and thus extend into the medieval or pre-Pala periods. While they appear to have been made in northern and eastern India, they also were manufactured in Nepal, outside the Gupta heartland. These Buddha figures follow the Gupta-style of stone Buddha images, specifically that developed in Sarnath, and to a lesser extent the style typical of Mathura.

The Rockefeller Buddha, as with all images in this group, is depicted standing with his right hand raised in the fear-not gesture (*abhayamudra*) and his left holds the end of his robe. The attraction this Gupta-style Buddha had for John 3rd is underlined by the fact that the collection owns a second, perhaps earlier, example of these very rare bronzes.

But it was the Chola-period bronzes of South India that clearly interested John 3rd the most. The collection owns twelve Chola-period bronzes, most of them striking by their large size. The Kaliya Krishna (Fig. 14) is 87.63 cm. tall and is one of the finest depictions of this theme known. The story is that Krishna finds the clear water of the Yamuna River polluted by the serpent Kaliya's poison. When Krishna jumps into the river in pursuit of Kaliya, he is attacked, not only by Kaliya, but by hundreds of his serpent followers and wives, much to the despair of the watching gopis on the bank. Krishna, however, begins to dance on Kaliya's central hood, trampling the snake until, beaten and repentant, Kaliya gives obeisance to Krishna.

The Chola artists chose to represent in bronze the moment after the fight when Kaliya is subdued and, hands in adoration, asks Krishna for release, in both a literal and metaphysical sense. The god delicately holds Kaliya's tail with his left hand and reassures the reptile with his right. This gesture signifies that the snake king can now approach the god without fear; it also indicates to the watching gopis that they need no longer be afraid as Krishna has triumphed.

Perhaps the most widely published South Asian object in the collection is the Kashmiri crowned Buddha (Fig. 15). The Buddha wears a four-cornered cape and performs the *dharmachakramudra* while sitting on a lotus, the central stem of which branches on both sides to support two flanking stupas. The stem grows out of water, indicated by wave patterns on top of the base, and on the front of the base is a rock or mountain motif with niches in which are included Gandharan-style deer and a wheel. What is being represented has received a variety of interpretations. Although it is too extensive to discuss here, the meaning rests on the identification of the Buddha (whether Shakyamuni or Vairocana) and the significance of the flanking stupas.

Unfortunately, the inscription on the lower front part of the base does not help us in suggesting a precise identification. The inscription translates as follows:

> This is the pious gift of the devout Shankarasena, the great Lord of the elephant brigade, and of the pure minded and pious princess Devashriya, made in the second day of Vaishakha in the year 3 or 8.

It is possible that the male and female figures dressed in Scythian costume which stand on each side of the base can be identified as the donors Shankarasena and Devashriya.

14 Kaliya Krishna
India
Chola period, 10th-11th century
Bronze
h. 87.63 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.22)
Krishna, an avatar of the Hindu god Yishnu, is shown dancing on the hood of the adoring and defeated snake king, Kaliya.

15 Crowned Buddha in Dharmachakramudra
Kashmir
8th-9th century
Brass inlays of copper and silver
h. 31.11 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.44)
This intricate sculpture was cast in one piece and is a tour de force of bronze casting technique.

16 Ganesha
India
9th-10th century
Sandstone
h. 125.73 cm.
(Acc. no. 1979.13)
Independent dancing images of Ganesha first occur around the 8th century and then become extremely popular in India.

14

15

16

Although the bronzes are the outstanding section of the South Asian material, there are a number of interesting stone sculptures, including four excellent large Pala-period Buddhist steles. But among the most dramatic of the stone sculptures is a large 125.73 cm. high) central Indian dancing Ganesha (Fig. 16). Dated to the ninth or tenth century, it shows a ten-armed Ganesha dancing to both earthly and celestial musicians. Although this short discussion of John 3rd's collection is brought to a close with the Ganesha, visitors to the collection at The Asia Society Galleries must begin their visit by passing the sculpture in the entrance lobby. Thus Ganesha, the deity who in Indian tradition is worshipped first at a Hindu temple and brings good luck and success, serves as an auspicious beginning to a remarkable experience.

Conclusion

John D. Rockefeller, 3rd's taste in art is at this point clear. He liked art that was classical and simple. He preferred three-dimensional objects such as ceramics and sculptures, the latter particularly in bronze. What remains to be pointed out is how his collecting differed from that of most other collectors. Collecting was not for John 3rd a personal passion, as it was, for example, for Charles Freer. Nor was he involved in buying and selling art, as was, for example, Nasli Heeramaneck. As with most of John 3rd's activities, he was willing to distance himself from the mechanics of collecting. While he clearly enjoyed the art he acquired, its acquisition was but one relatively minor activity in which he was involved. His collecting of Asian art was part of a general philanthropic and social interest in Asia. The collection stands as a tribute to what good advice, taste, and money could produce.

FOOTNOTES

1 Besides John 3rd and Nelson, the other three sons were David (President of the Chase Manhattan Bank), Winthrop (past Governor of Arkansas), and Laurance (conservationist and real estate developer).

2 As a recipient myself of a JDR 3rd Fund Grant in 1976, I wish to express here my personal appreciation to the Fund. When the Fund was dissolved after Mr. Rockefeller's death in 1978, its last director, Richard Lanier, founded the Asian Cultural Council, a new organization which continues to support activities similar to those once financed by the JDR 3rd Fund.

3 See his various essays in S. E. Lee, *Past, Present, East and West* (New York: George Braziller, 1983).

4 While most of the objects in the collection were given to The Asia Society, a few pieces were willed to family members. One example is the large Dvaravati-style bronze Buddha illustrated in Fig. 1 which is being admired by the Rockefellers.

5 Quoted from John 3rd's 1974 letter announcing his intent to give the collection to The Asia Society.

6 Quoted in Gordon Washburn's Foreword to S.E. Lee, *Asian Art: Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd* (New York: The Asia Society Inc., 1970), p. 7.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

8 J. Meech-Pekarik, "Notable Japanese Ceramics," *Apollo,* 118 (November 1983):431.

9 S. E. Lee, "Asian Arts of the Rockefellers," *Connaissance des Arts* no. 25 (February 1982):55.

10 I wish to thank Hollis Goodall for this observation.

11 Lee, *Asian Art: Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd,* p. 7.

12 M. Giteau, *Khmer Sculpture and the Angkor Civilization* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1965), p. 144.

13 H. W. Woodward, Jr., "Interrelations in a Group of South-East Asian Sculptures," *Apollo,* 118 (November 1983): 379-80.

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The bibliography for objects in the collection is fairly extensive and I freely acknowledge my debt to the authors of the works I consulted. I would like to thank particularly Dr. Robert D. Mowry for reading and commenting on a draft of this paper. Listed below are a selection of sources:

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The John Gilmore Ford Collection,
Photography Blakeslee—Lane

Dancing Ganesha
Uttar Pradesh, India
8th-9th century
Buff sandstone
h. 74.30 cm.; w. 39.37 cm.

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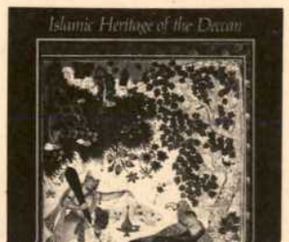

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BOOK REVIEW

Title	:	**Ramo Vigrahvan Dharmah: Rama Embodiment of Righteousness**
Author	:	C. Sivaramamurti
Publisher	:	Jayant Baxi for Kanak Publications, 16/F-3, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110 002. (1980)
Format	:	19.3 x 25 cms. pp. X, 138 including 3 colour plates +67 b/w plates
Price	:	Rs. 180.00; US $ 36.00

Many of us who had the good fortune of being associated with the late Shri C. Sivaramamurti – and I was one of them – knew that he was saturated with knowledge of Sanskrit literature. Even his casual discourse was sprinkled with Sanskrit quotations. Moreover, in his view 'Righteousness' was the essence of life. Thus there could be no better candidate than Sivaramamurti for handling a theme like that of the book – *Ramo Vigrahvan Dharmah* – one of his last writings. His conviction of *dharma* was such that he never bore ill-will towards anybody and was ready to help all those in need. His great desire to go on a pilgrimage to Ayodhya – the birthplace of Rama – was unfortunately never fulfilled.

The task of a reviewer is difficult because he has to perform his duty objectively. There is a need for more accurate assessment of some of the plates. For example, the Kulu (Shangri) *Ramayana* paintings have consistently been labelled as Basohli. Again the subject of Plate 65, possibly from Gujarat rather than from Rajasthan, cannot be easily accepted as that of Rama expounding *dharma* since the person is shown in *varada mudra.* Similarly certain English translations need to be reviewed; for example, the term *taptajambunada* (p. 41) cannot be accepted as "burnished gold", nor the word "deluge" for *pralayagni* or *jalada* (pp. 71 and 97) for, the term deluge generally stands for the cosmic flood.

The publishers should have spared the Sanskrit quotations from the abundant proofreading errors. But these and similar points, however, are of minor importance compared to the greatness of the author and his work under review.

The learned author has viewed Valmiki's *Ramayana* as well as later descriptions of Rama as an eternal truth, overlooking the development of the concept of *dharma.* Thus the study has the nature of historical horizontality. *Dharma* is a Sanskrit term which defies translation, especially into a single english word. It definitely has a much wider connotation than "religion" and perhaps is nearer to "rectitude". Prophets like Valmiki pronounce this concept through Rama while projecting the common experience of mankind, within the Hindu framework. Valmiki defends *dharma*, as in the cases of seeming contradictions such as the slaying of Tadaka and Vali, or Sita's fire ordeal. Here Rama's words and actions are based on his personal judgement.

Many texts, besides the *Dharmashastra* literature, preach *dharma*: Bhishma does so in the *Shantiparvan* of the *Mahabharata* and Krishna in the *Gita.* Even in Valmiki's *Ramayana* episode after episode unravels the truth especially in situations of moral conflict. Rama's exile is a good example where *dharma* is debated (between various groups) and it is established in both words and practice by Rama. Such examples perhaps project the *Purvapaksha* and *Uttarapaksha* (the opponent's view in full as well as the real point of view of the defence in final answer) in the traditional debating manner.

Dharma means here, not the Hindu religion, nor is it a path to *moksha* (salvation), but the ethical or moral principles laid down by Hindu society, the various duties and responsibilities to oneself, to others and to society as a whole. Even in the vedas, particularly in the *Rigveda* the term *dharma* denotes a tradition, an ethical mode or an order which sustains the Truth.

Shri Sivaramamurti has selected innumerable instances where Rama is the fountain-head of righteousness. He not only follows the traditional path but is its great exponent. Such debates are frequent in the text. Rama is a perfect being according to Hindu tradition and hence the concept of *Rama-rajya* (or the ideal state of being) emerged, where "rectitude" is instrumental to duty as also expounded in the *Gita.*

The purpose of this book is reflected in Shri Sivaramamurti's text between the lines: that each of us may find in Rama an ideal image and endeavour to reach that degree of perfection. Valmiki aimed at this, which Shri Sivaramamurti has brought out in the present book and in that respect this work presents the essence of Valmiki's *Ramayana* in its ethical aspect. The author has cited these ideals as developed by later authors like Kalidasa, Kumaradasa, Bhavabhuti, Kshemendra and others.

Perhaps Shri Sivaramamurti was impelled by such a promise of Grace by Rama to produce this book and, if there is something like *moksha* he was the fittest candidate amongst us.

The book is provided with adequate plates to illustrate episodes from Rama's life. The publishers have been successful in making this a fine production.

— Anand Krishna

NOTE

The Yakshis from Sanghol

Deepa Nag

1

Remarkable indeed has been the unearthing of beautiful red sandstone dryads or *salabhanjikas,* as they are known in Indian literature, one bright day at Sanghol, Punjab. These sculptures belonging to the Mathura School of art 1st-2nd century A.D., were found in the vicinity of an ancient Buddhist *stupa* and monastery complex rising, as it were, out of the earth almost 2000 years after their mysterious burial. In all probability this was a bid by the monks to save these works of art from the marauding Huna invasion but the site remained desolate never to regain the normalcy of its purpose.

The National Museum, New Delhi, held an exhibition of these sculptures.

Historical Context of Kushana Art

The *stupa* at Sanghol, a cylindrical structure over a raised platform is an important monument of the Kushana period. Architecturally, the internal plan of the *stupa* is like a *dharmachakra* or sacred wheel with spokes. No less than sixty-five *sthamba yoshitas* or railing pillars have been excavated so far.[1]

The pillars are carved with charming young damsels supposed to be *yakshis.* Etymologically the term *salabhanjika* means a tree spirit belonging to the 'sal' tree but symbolically represents the spirit or deity related to any tree. The symbolism taken further denotes the potency of nature. *Yakshis* in Indian mythology thus represent the female deity, consort of *yaksha,* Local Lord or God with both malevolent and benevolent powers, since nature has many ravishing aspects.[2] However, in the case of these *salabhanjikas,* it is the benevolent aspect that is usually depicted.

During the early Christian eras, the *Bhagavata* cult of Hinduism was popular in and around Mathura. But with the rise of Buddhism, Mathura became a Buddhist centre as well. The Kushana kings took a personal interest in Buddhism, extending royal patronage to its development, particularly through art. Mathura therefore had an established tradition of craftsmanship in sculpture.

The Kushana artists thus fulfilled Hindu, Jain and Buddhist needs by providing images for the worshipping of folk deities in the various shrines, deriving inspiration from mythology, folklore, Buddhist Jatakas, Jain stories and devotional songs heard traditionally by the people. So they freely used an assorted repertoire of motifs—vegetal, animal and human.

In the case of the Sanghol pieces we

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note the additional force of Buddhist art symbols, for instance, the *dharmachakra* (the wheel of life or universal law), the *ushnisha* (representing Buddha's wisdom), *stupa* (the reliquary mound of saints) and beautiful lotus motifs expressive of purity. These are carved along the railings propagating Buddhism through art symbols since in the 1st century A.D. the anthropomorphic image of Buddha was still taboo because of the indescribable nature of *Tathagata.*[3] However, there are royal devotees and monks dressed like *bodhisattvas* with garlands in their hands.

Historically and sociologically, being rooted in the ancient cult of folk and nature worship, the *yakshi* theme was common in all religious practices. That perhaps provides a rationale for the presence of these lively, nude damsels in the premises of a Buddhist monastery representing a religion whose *dharma* emphasised the transitoriness of nature and a path leading away from it. For, early Buddhism like its contemporary Jainism and Hinduism, was realistic enough to see that salvation could never be sought by negating nature as such but by transcending it in stages.[4] Hence, the celebration of life, the essential unity, fecundity and harmony of all life forms which these lovely maidens symbolize, seem perfectly reconciled to their perhaps otherwise questionable status of adorning the sacred premises of monastery and *stupa.*

The Graeco-Indian Tradition

The origin of the *yakshi* motif in fact goes back to the Indus valley civilization, with the Tree Goddess of the Harappan seals reappearing in the environs of the *stupas* at Barhut and Sanchi. The Sanghol sculptures fall into this stream of tradition along with the colossal *yaksha* and *yakshi* images of the preceding Sunga period of the 2nd and 3rd centuries B.C.

This brings us to the controversy of whether the earliest images of Buddha were initiated by this ancient Indian tradition outlined here or by Greek values as held by early European scholars. Coomaraswamy pointed to the indigenous tradition as the origin of the emergence of the developed Buddha image. His strongest support for this standpoint were the *yaksha* and *yakshi* images, which paved the way for later classical Gupta art.[5] One wonders what the master's interpretation would have been had he seen the Sanghol beauties.

Interestingly, some of these pieces seem to project a mature integration. Undeniably, the compositions are entirely indigenous in mood and theme, the mildly erotic physicality being completely symbolic as is all erotic art of ancient India. Nevertheless, one cannot but find traces of Hellenistic beauty in the facial expressions. One can discern the wisdom of Athena (*salabhanjika*, fig. no. 1) or the grace of Venus (*Ashoka, dohada* fig. no. 2) in the arch of the eyebrows, the bridge of the nose, the oval of the face and in the curve of the mouth. But this is only in the faces. However, the limbs, the gestures, the stance of the body in its alluring *tribhanga* pose (fig. no. 3) and overall emotive quality of the compositions are at once both sensual

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and metaphysical, as it is expressive of divinity in the most concrete terms.

The Sanghol sculptures stylistically, seem to be suggesting sufficient influence of Greek ideals as well as the natural, ethnic beauty of the Ganges valley people in the land of Krishna and his lovely gopis.

Mother Nature and her Bounty

The cult of *yakshis* and their depiction in art provides us with a fascinating glimpse into ancient India's vision of natural harmony and the primordial ecstasy of creation known as *Prakriti.* It was this notion that was transformed into the attractive sandstone *salabhanjikas.* Since the divine is in all creation, man responded to nature by worshipping her in the form of a prodigious and fecund mother.[6]

Here in the Sanghol pieces this theme is amply illustrated in at least three ways: (i) the exposed nudity (fig. no. 4) of the sculptures symbolising not eroticism but fertility which is in keeping with ancient fertility cults expressed through the images of Hariti, Amba or Lakshmi; (ii) There is the mother figure of Lakshmi or *Prakriti* carrying a child in her arms (fig. no. 5) for protection and pressing her breast gently to depict the sustenance of life-giving milk; (iii) There are touching mother-child compositions where the mother plays with the child by throwing the child up or giving a rattle to the child as if to emphasise the creative playfulness or *lila* of nature.

Samskara and *Samsara*—A World View

In all ancient Indian philosophies, particularly as in Buddhism, it is all 'living beings' (including *preta* or spirits and animals) that aspire towards salvation or *nirvana. Samskara* is the traditional notion of reincarnation whereby each creature (including birds and animals) has a chance of gaining merits in each life. Thus each creature may be a potential *bodhisattva* on its way to attaining *nirvana.* So we find a rich artistic portrayal of animals, bird and plant life (often based on the *Jatakas*) in and around ancient *stupas* and monasteries to remind believers about the sacredness of all life forms.

Here too, in the Sanghol compositions there are numerous expositions of plants—the flowering *ashoka, kadamba, champaka,* honeysuckle and other creepers, birds in the loving *suka-krida* pose with parrots as well as swans and animals—like the lion along with *vyalas*

or half-human, half-animal beings.[7] Though these sculptures do not concentrate on animals as such, yet the philosophy of the ancient forest culture or *aranyakas* comes alive atmospherically with its reverence for natural and organic form, each creature working out its *samskara,* on its road to freedom.

Samsara is the other related concept meaning reality or the world as we perceive it. Here nature or the world is revealed through the sensitive and subtle emotional nuances in the expressions and gestures, for instance, the *yakshi* who looks into the mirror (fig. no. 4) to remind herself tenderly of her lover by noting the scratches of passion. The whole gamut of human feeling and involvement is lyrically presented whether love, joy or sympathy permeated in the *yakshis* absorbed while playing musical instruments (fig. no. 6) or envisaged in the couples watching them in amusement often from balconies or from behind curtains above the main figures. Adornment and jewellery is sophisticated, specially the alluring girdle of the *kati mekhala* and the coiffed hairstyle known as 'cupid's arrow', each detail permeated with the pulse of life.

But *samsara* has its dark side too, as poignantly portrayed by the *vama-yaksha,* the dwarfed *vahana* or carrier of the *yakshi*—its ugliness, sorrow and often half-human form symbolising pathos, grotesqueness and alienness of nature. Man and his environment are thus visualized as interdependent aspects.

Idea and Image—The Aesthetic Dimension

The Sanghol sculptures aesthetically convey not isolated values or individual descriptions but through the single material of its mottled red-pink stone, a concerted unity of all life forms. All organic forms look as if derived from one primal substance whether vegetal, animal or human as they seem to grow from the soil with pulsating limbs entwining branches, as creepers embrace trees. There is a dream-like effect resulting from the gliding planes of the compositions. The figures emerge into a bold roundness as compared to the sculptural flatness of the earlier 1st, 2nd and 3rd centuries B.C., with the play of light thus stressing the dynamic quality of life.

Since the Kushana artists were image-making for the first time their craft had inevitable limitations, for instance, a commendable but not perfected attempt to indicate the diaphanousness of garments. It was left to the Gupta artists to realise what the Kushana artists had started.

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The 'reducing' technique is apparent in various degrees of excellence. The figures were first drawn in charcoal to demarcate the raised portion. The rest was chiselled away to different levels for supporting imagery.

A sense of space is thus created by the rocks, two varieties of which are elucidated as they actually occur between Agra and Mathura: one is horizontal, the other inclinational. *Sadrysya* or aesthetic identity is achieved by carving inclining rocks to support the inclined figure of an upward climbing woman (fig. no. 7).

It is not academic explanations upon which the greatness of art depends but on the imaginative projection of the felt quality and tensions of life by the artist,[8] making each composition significant although the theme may often be repeated as embodied in the case of *salabhanjika* or the *Ashoka dohada* pose where the *surasundari* (fig. no. 2) gently kicks the branch as she also leans against it. What could be a more refined portrayal of nature than the leaves trembling in the breeze manifest through the minute carved ripples of air on the surface or the eagerness of the open beaked goose longing for a drop of pearly water falling from the *yakshis* graceful tresses after a bath? Surely here the *ailpin's* vision echoes the ecstasy of *Prakriti* herself.

FOOTNOTES

1 L. P. Sihare, *Kushan Sculptures from Sanghol,* New Delhi, 1985, Vol. I, pp. 13-14
2 Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Yakshas,* Delhi, 1971, p. 32
3 Niharranjan Ray, *The Image of the Buddha,* Ed. David L. Snell Grove, New Delhi, 1978, p. 14
4 G. C. Pande, *Origin of Buddhism in India,* University of Allahabad, 1957, pp. 391-511
5 Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Origin of Buddha Image,* Delhi, 1972, pp. 12-13
6 Richard Lannoy, *The Speaking Tree,* London, 1971, p. 3
7 Sashi Asthana, *Kushana Sculptures from Sanghol,* New Delhi, 1985, Vol. I, p. 25
8 Susanne K. Langer, *Mind—An Essay on Human Feeling,* Baltimore, 1967, Vol. I, p. 73

FIGURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

COVER
Photograph Courtesy The Asia Society, New York; Photography Otto E. Nelson

CHARLES LANG FREER (1856-1919)
Photographs Courtesy Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.: Figs. 1-19

AVERY BRUNDAGE (1887-1975)
Photographs Courtesy Asian Art Museum of San Francisco: Figs. 1-22

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, 3RD (1906-1978)
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S FROM THE PAN-ASIAN COLLECTION

Pratapaditya Pal

The portfolio illustrates a selection of sculptures from the well-known Pan-Asian collection which was formed by the late Christian Humann. Many of the objects will be familiar to readers of MARG as they were included in a much-acclaimed exhibition entitled THE SENSUOUS IMMORTALS organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The selections presented here, however, include many pieces that have not been published before.

Christian Humann was born into a noble family of France in 1932 and migrated to the United States early in the forties. Educated in America, he earned his living as an investment banker in New York. Collecting art was a family pursuit, but mostly in European art. Humann, too, began by acquiring European drawings, porcelains, and paintings. By the early sixties, however, he had expanded his horizon and turned to Asia, and, before his premature death in 1981, he had assembled one of the most comprehensive collections of arts from most Asian civilizations and cultures from West Asia to Japan. A compulsive collector, he bought whatever took his fancy, whether it was an archaic Chinese jade, a delicate Japanese cloisonné, an ancient Persian pot, or Mughal jades and exquisitely inlaid daggers. His abiding interest, however, was in sculpture principally, and in bronzes in particular. Although he did acquire some fine examples of Chinese and Japanese sculpture, he was especially attracted to the Indian and Southeast Asian traditions, which is why THE SENSUOUS IMMORTALS, the only public exhibition of material from his vast collection, was limited to sculptures from South and Southeast Asia.

A self-effacing and somewhat reclusive man, which is why he chose to remain anonymous, he was extremely generous in sharing his collections with scholars and curators. As he lived in apartments in New York and Paris, a great deal of his collection was for years on loan to the Denver Art Museum, while large portions were stored in other museums. In that sense, he was primarily an acquisitor, and I think the chase for him always remained more exciting than the actual possession of a work of art. Nevertheless, he did have a phenomenal memory and, without any inventory or curator, could recall exactly which piece was in which museum. He loved visiting dealers, sitting with them for hours, enjoyed discussing the objects and striking a bargain. In the Collector's Preface to THE SENSUOUS IMMORTALS, he personally acknowledged his debt to the dealers when he wrote:

> It has become axiomatic to view a private assemblage of art works as the result of collaboration between scholars, dealers, and the collector. The Pan-Asian collection . . . reinforces this truism. The objects in the collection bear witness to the taste and connoisseurship of a large number of scholars and dealers alike.

Most of the collection was formed between 1960 and 1975 when he became ill. Although the few years left to him were marked by a gradual deterioration of his health and he was constantly in great pain, he kept on acquiring almost until the very end. Unfortunately, after his death, the collection could not be kept together, and was ultimately sold. The entire Asian collection was bought by the noted New York art dealer Robert H. Ellsworth. A measure of Christian Humann's taste is the fact that, within weeks of his death, the family received a letter from The Cleveland Museum of Art listing the various objects they wished to buy. Some of the sculptures reproduced here now belong to major American museums, such as The Cleveland Museum, The Metropolitan in New York, and other public and private collections across the land. Others are with Robert Ellsworth and are reproduced here with his kind permission.

One cannot do better than to end this brief note with a moving passage that Christian Humann wrote back in 1977 in THE SENSUOUS IMMORTALS:

> If the viewers of the show and the readers of this catalog derive pleasure from their contact with these sculptures, it will be due to the instinctive appeal of works of art executed by believers in any humanistic creed. The spiritual inspiration of the nameless sculptors represented here imbues their work with an imposing presence and a contemplative as well as physical vitality. But it is probably those figures in which a deity's compassion is most lovingly expressed that will generate the greatest enjoyment. And is that not as it should be, since in the final analysis love and compassion are what religion is all about.

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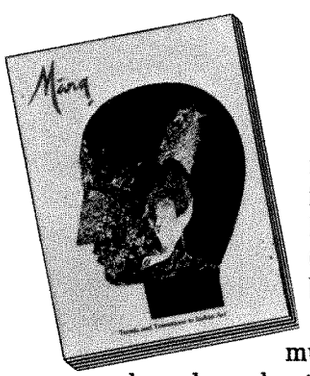

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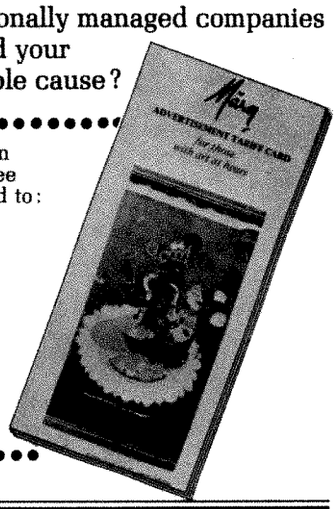

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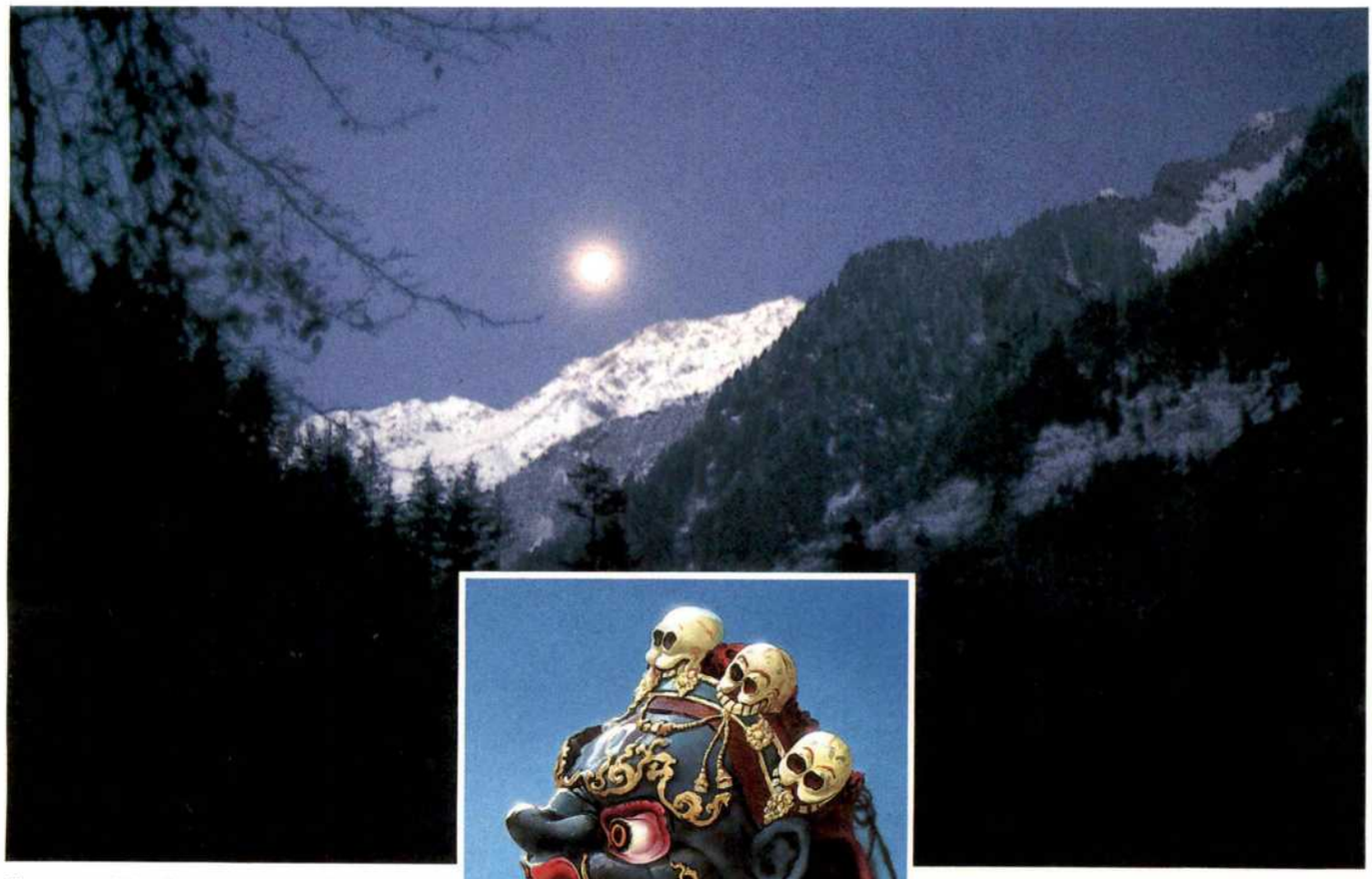

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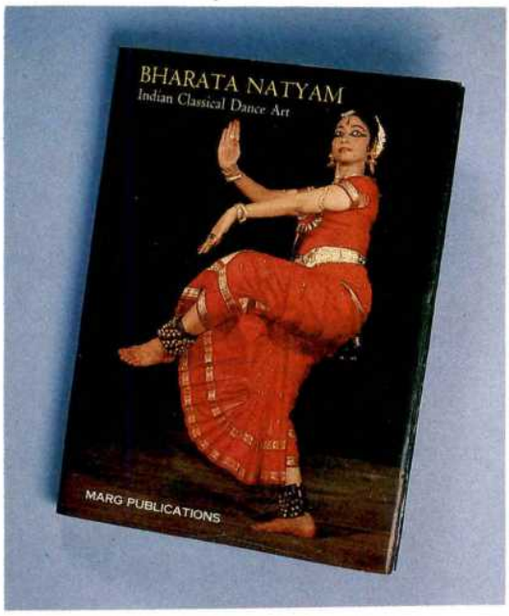

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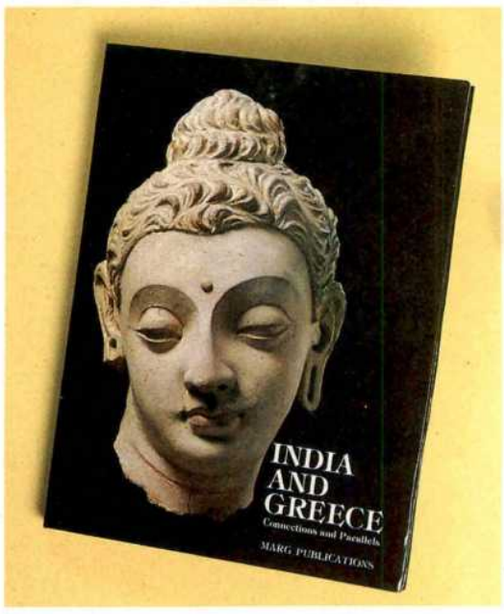

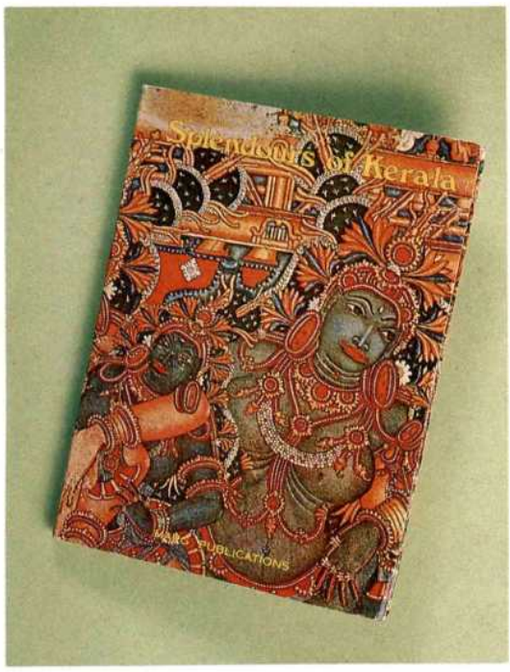

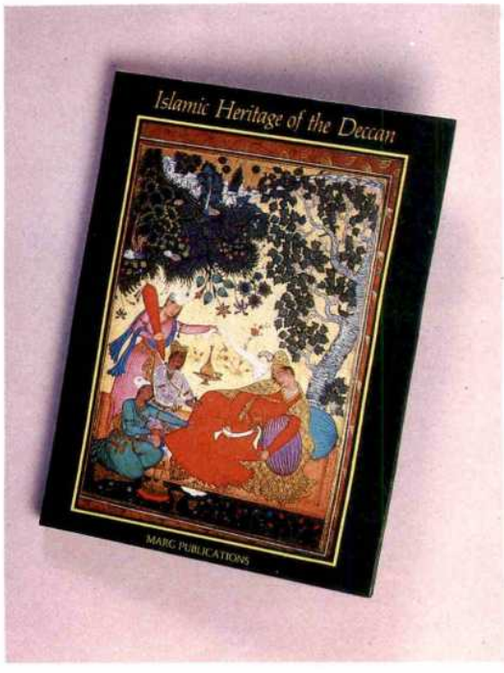

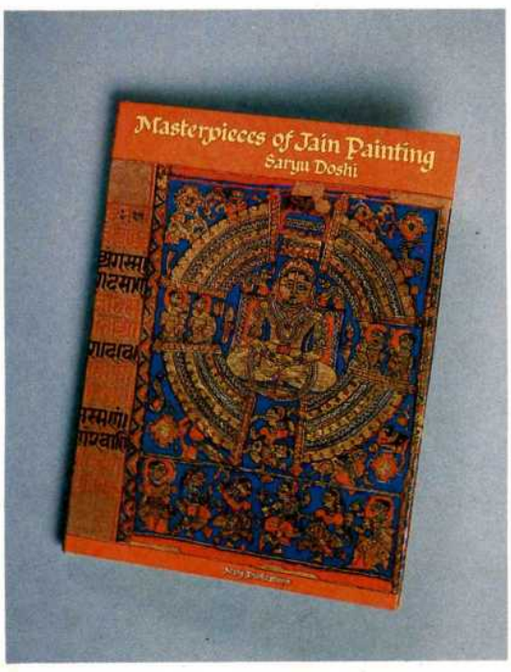

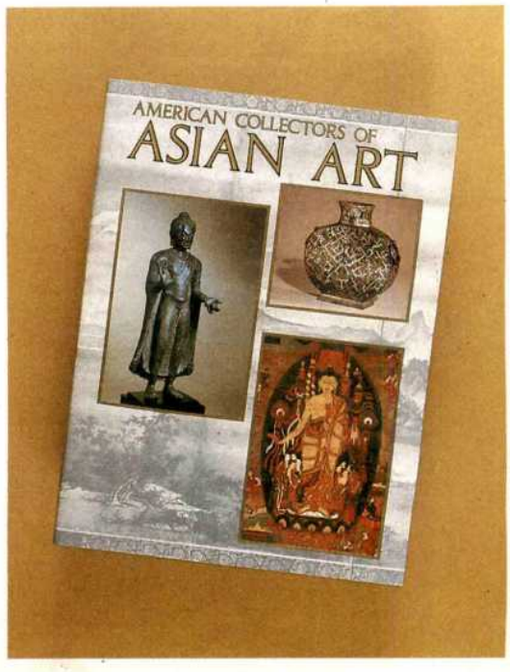

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